Communication and Power
IN THE GLOBAL ERA

Orders and Borders

edited by
Marwan M. Kraidy

Routledge

Communication and Power in the Global Era

This book revisits how we think about communication and power in the global era. It takes stock of the last fifty years of scholarship, maps key patterns and concepts, and sets an agenda for theory and research.

The book addresses such questions as:

- How are national and cultural identities re-fashioned and expressed in the global era?
- How can we best understand the emergence of multiple and sometimes antagonistic modernities worldwide?
- How are political struggles fought and communicated on the local–national–global nexus?
- How do we integrate emerging media environments in global communication studies?

Bringing together essays from a range of internationally renowned scholars, this book will be useful to undergraduate and postgraduate students on Media and Communication Studies courses, particularly those studying globalization and global media.

Marwan M. Kraidy is Professor of Global Communication at the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania and the Edward Said Chair of American Studies at the American University of Beirut. His latest book, *Reality Television and Arab Politics: Contention in Public Life*, has won three major awards.

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Communication and Power in the Global Era

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Acknowledgments

Chapter 1

Orders and borders in global communication

Marwan M. Kraidy

The area of study known as "global communication studies" is in a post-paradigmatic stage. A cursory look at book and journal publishing in this area during the last ten years reveals a dizzying array of approaches and perspectives, some guided by erstwhile dominant paradigms like modernization, dependency and globalization, but many others engaging a variety of problems and literatures ranging from postcolonial theory to digital media. Lurking underneath this diversity of topics and perspectives, however, are perennial concerns of power and agency, structure and culture, nation and identity. In this volume, drawn from the December 2010 symposium of the Scholars Program in Culture and Communication at the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania, we use the trope of "orders and borders" to re-visit how we think about communication and power in the global era, to take stock of the last fifty years of scholarship in that field, to map key patterns and concepts, and to set an agenda for theory and research. Questions we address include: How do we capture the important social and political implications of global market forces while eschewing a monolithic understanding of neo-liberalism that flattens contextual specificity and cultural difference? How are national and cultural identities re-fashioned and expressed in the global era? How can we best understand the emergence of multiple and sometimes antagonistic modernities worldwide? How are political struggles fought and communicated on the local-national-global nexus? How do we integrate emerging media environments in global communication studies?

In 1998, the international communication scholar Oliver Boyd-Barrett wrote that:

> [t]here has been a growing consensus in the literature … that previous models of international communication may be abandoned in a process of linear development that has moved through theories of … propaganda, through to modernization and free flow, to dependency and cultural or media imperialism, supplanted in turn by theories of the "autonomous reader" and culminating in discourses of globalization that play on an infinite variety of "global" and "local" …

He concluded that "intellectual development in the field of international communication appears not to proceed on the basis of exhaustive testing but lurches from one theory, preoccupation, dimension to another with inadequate attention to accumulative construction."[1]

The state of global communication scholarship remains in flux more than half a century after the field of international communication emerged in propaganda studies. The successive paradigms that have since then shaped global communication theory and research—modernization, dependency, globalization, post-globalization—can be considered intellectual orders in themselves. They also reflect global geopolitical forces, economic arrangements, and cultural formations, and in turn shape thematic discussions about national and global public spheres, nation-branding, media and migration, etc. The issue of power cuts across these ways of thinking about and studying global communication, whether as an unarticulated assumption or as a major concept. With that in mind, this book uses the prism of "orders and borders" to examine how power works across intellectual, cultural, and national boundaries in global communication studies. The chapters in this collection provide nuanced analyses of the oblique and complex ways in which power works in a variety of contexts worldwide.

Power in global communication

Power first emerged as a central preoccupation of global communication research with the rise of the cultural imperialism paradigm. That approach, which saw its heyday in the 1970s, was ostensibly about "culture" but actually focused on the political economy of global communication and information. Critics have argued that the cultural imperialism perspective suffers from a static conception of culture closely associated with the nation-state, glossing over internal ethnic, religious, linguistic and ideological diversity. In addition, scholars who followed the cultural imperialism approach made assumptions about cultural authenticity that ignored historical change. Finally, claims about monolithic cultural domination bring to mind early "magic bullet" and "hypodermic needle" theories based on now disputed assumptions about audience passivity.[2] By the mid-1990s, it was a matter of consensus that the concept of cultural imperialism had "lost much of its critical bite and historic validity."[3]

A concomitant debate about power emerged within international communication research at large, and more specifically within the critical political economy tradition. Straubhaar, for example, reinterpreted Galtung's 1971 concept of "asymmetrical interdependence" to account for complex international media relations characterized by differential degrees of power.[4] Mattelart disagreed, arguing against the notion of "interdependence" which he considers a "leitmotif at the heart of the doctrine of soft power" obscuring the existence of a hierarchy of nation-states and absolving dominant countries

from responsibility.[5] Nonetheless, the debate over the notion of inter-
dependence reflected a shift in the discussion towards a grappling of the com-
plexity inherent in locating agency and accounting for the complex workings
of power in media structures, at a time when globalization, as both process
and concept, was taking center stage.

By the mid-1990s scholars called for substituting "cultural imperialism" with
"cultural globalization." Though globalization is "a maddeningly euphemistic
term laden with desire, fantasy, fear, attraction – and intellectual imprecision
about what it is supposed to describe,"[6] the concept was from the early days
of the debate connected to the notion of culture. A 1990 issue of *Theory,
Culture and Society* subsequently reissued as a book launched the debate on
global culture by expressing skepticism about the existence of global cultural
homogeneity.[7] In his contribution to that volume, Smith for example described
a global culture that "is tied to *no place or period. It is context-less*, a true
mélange of disparate components drawn from everywhere and nowhere, borne
upon the modern chariots of global telecommunication systems,"[8] surrepti-
tiously introducing the idea of deterritorialization and its more controversial
cousin, hybridity. That edited collection instituted the vocabulary of the
Anglophone debate on the tension in global culture between cohesion and
dispersal, homogenization and heterogenization, with Appadurai expounding
the notion of "disjuncture" and Wallerstein casting culture as "the ideological
battleground of the modern world-system."[9]

The agenda to shift from "cultural imperialism" to "cultural globalization"
resonated with the post-Cold War era and the rethinking therein of conceptual
approaches to comprehend local-global tensions. Interlocking networks of sub-
national, national, and supra-national forces have stripped the nation-state of
its monopoly over political agency. "Globalization" to its proponents was a
better framework for international communication studies because it conveys a
process with less coherence and direction, weakening the cultural unity of all
nation-states, not only those in the developing world.[10] Second, the "cultural
turn" attracted the relatively contained field of international communication
into a more explicitly interdisciplinary configuration of approaches that some
have referred to as "global media studies."[11]

As a proponent of the imperialism to globalization shift, Tomlinson argued
that an understanding of the "complex connectivity"[12] of globalization is
impossible to achieve outside of "the conceptual vocabularies of culture."[13] By
quantitatively and qualitatively magnifying the interconnections between var-
ious localities, in his view globalization connotes a phenomenological "global
spatial-proximity."[14] Tomlinson emphasized the need to "unravel from the
complexly intertwined practices of the cultural, the economic and the political,
a sense of *purpose* of the cultural – that of making life meaningful,"[15] an
unpacking which requires the explicit recognition of the diversity of local
engagements with the multiple dimensions of globalization. While nodes on
the network of global connectivity – such as large airports – are relatively

standardized, local communities, according to Tomlinson, retain their diversity, because of the continuing centrality of local life. Tomlinson is therefore critical of the cultural imperialism thesis because it implies an unjustified logical chain linking connectivity, proximity, and cultural uniformity.

Replacing "cultural imperialism" with "cultural globalization" raises questions because of the ideological divide between the concepts of imperialism and globalization.[16] This antagonism is manifest, for example, in how "cultural imperialism" and "cultural globalization" view the role of the state, a persistent issue in international communication research.[17] The former regards powerful Western states to be complicit with transnational corporations in exploiting weaker states in developing nations with the help of accommodating elites, while in the latter the state is increasingly invisible, or when present, plays an allegedly protectionist or authoritarian role.[18] Because it assumes a weak state, cultural globalization itself is a discourse whose bases are more ideological than empirical. In effect, cultural globalization elicits the same sort of criticism that riddled cultural imperialism since the 1980s: because it is ideologically motivated, it tends to be conceptually ill defined. Consequently, this approach is less than ideal for a *critical* understanding of contemporary global culture and communication—i.e. one that focuses on how power shapes representations, infrastructures and flows in global communication.

Orders and borders

"Cultural imperialism" and "cultural globalization" can be considered as intellectual orders that may have exhausted their usefulness. As several contributors to this book show, these orders can be best understood by shifting the attention away from the theoretical hard core of these paradigms, in order to consider instead the borders between them—intellectual, cultural, technological, material—and resulting interdependencies, hybridities, scalar changes, mixed genres, and convergent media forms. Whereas yesterday's international communication scholars were focused on media systems within nation-states or on media and cultural flows between nation-states, today's scholars of global communication have to contend with sub-national and supra-national factors re-casting the role of the nation-state, extensive movement of people, images and ideologies across cultural and geopolitical borders, and a convergent and networked media environment. As boundaries shift, institutions morph, and networks spawn new cultural, political and economic energies, capital, labor, media and culture circulate globally and trans-locally. At the same time as they transcend some borders, these developments have created new political and economic orders based on rules of exclusion and inclusion—another process of "bordering" that creates new identities, digital divides, knowledge haves and have-nots.

A closing question, and an invitation: Is the lack of accumulative theory construction identified by Boyd-Barrett to be bemoaned? Or could we rather

consider the absence of broad consensual frameworks an opportunity, as this absence fuels debates that, however unsettled, pivot on key themes and problematics that continue to animate the field? To take one example, think of the nation-state. Whether regarded as the locus of socio-economic development, a victim of more powerful nation-states, a "container" for comparative research, a protector of borders and creator of boundaries, a manager of flows of people and goods, concrete and symbolic, a wannabe corporate actor concerned with developing a brand, or a mediator of global capital in the neoliberal age, the nation-state has endured as a key problematic in global communication studies.

So rather than being concerned with building grand paradigms that would outlast the periodicity of fads, perhaps we could consider other strategies for thinking forward and theorizing the nexus of communication and power in the global era. In a famous 1901 article, an encyclopedia entry in which the French sociologists Paul Fauconnet and Marcel Mauss sought to explain the object and methods of sociology to the elusive general reader, the authors wrote that "serious research leads one to unite what is ordinarily separated or to distinguish what is ordinarily confused."[19] The task at hand, then, is to rethink how we study global communication, culture and power by setting up a dialogue between empirical work in local and national settings, on the one hand, and theorizing, on the other hand, shifting links between a variety of media platforms, national contestations, and transnational crises. This volume aims to provide a vigorous contribution to that dialogue.

Outline of the book

Contributors to this book explore the promising spaces long situated between paradigms—at the borders of orders. The chapters that follow challenge us to reconsider how we think about global communication and power. In doing so, they re-visit traditional areas of concern, shedding new light on old problems. Consider the issue of the nation-state, which global communication scholars have conceived of as an exclusive and hermetically closed locus of analysis, a victim or a mediator of transnational capital, of the agonizing relic of the old international system.

In contrast, the first half of this book takes a fresh look at the role of the nation-state and the implications of that changing role for global communication studies. As Le Han (Chapter 2) explains, the book's first part—" Ordering borders: The transnational management of subjectivity"—tackles how intensified migration complicates national identity and belonging, and suggests that understanding the circulation of people and identities across boundaries requires us to consider interactions between the nation-state and forces of globalization. As Hector Amaya shows us in "Nativist liberalism and the disciplining of Spanish language media," (Chapter 3) and Myria Georgiou explains in "Transnational nomads: Articulations of subjectivity across

diasporic mediascapes" (Chapter 4), a consideration of language and discourse about how transnational forces challenge national identity helps as understand complex movements of people and ideologies across and within national borders.

The book's second part, "Branding nations: Re-imagining communities in neo-liberal states," examines how nation-states have become actively engaged in not only policing their physical borders and cultural boundaries, but, as Andrew C. Crocco (Chapter 5) tells it, also in shaping and circulating strategic images of themselves. Paula Chakravartty in "Media, modernity, and inequality: *Aam Admi* in India Inc." (Chapter 6), analyzes how a partnership between the Indian nation-state and Indian capital has succeeded in projecting a positive image of "global India" as an active participant in economic globalization, while internal socio-economic issues remain unresolved. In "Old nations, new brands: Marketing intimacy in the new Europe" (Chapter 7), Anikó Imre addresses, by looking at the case of Romania, the ways in which nation-branding leads to a redefinition of nationality and citizenship, shuffling national identifiers while at the same time re-inscribing old power relations within the nation. Looking at Japan in "Culture and national border admin-istration in 21st-century Japan" (Chapter 8), Koichi Iwabuchi explores the Japanese nation-state's efforts to control incoming and outgoing flows of people, images, and cultural commodities, shining light on the dual impulses towards on the one hand protectionism and provincialism, and on the other hand cosmopolitanism and full participation in globalization.

The second half of the book re-visits two central tropes in global commu-nication studies: modernity (Part III) and resistance (Part IV). The book's third part, "Being modern: Situating the grand narrative," tackles the vexing pro-blem of the modern in global communication studies. As Piotr Szpunar (Chapter 9) underscores, postmodernity remains an important analytical tool to come to terms with the meaning and consequences of modernity. In "The centrality of televisions of the center in today's globalized world" (Chapter 10), Paddy Scannell explores the role of "central" media institutions, like the BBC and al-Jazeera, in a globalized world. In contrast to arguments about the fragmentation of national and transnational mediascapes into small, net-worked media, Scannell argues that national and international "big media" institutions remain central because they "hold" deep historical time in place. Relatedly, in "Towards a vertical hermeneutics of the modern: On modernness" (Chapter 11), Tarik Sabry focuses on several "double separations" that ground our understandings of the modern, and narrows down on the hybrid categories and experiences resulting from these binaries.

Contributors to the book's fourth part, "Destabilizing orders: Resistance and social transformation," revisit the notion of resistance in global times, not as a matter of subversive decoding strategies or semiotic guerrilla warfare, but rather as media practice, spanning the gamut from "old" media like radio in South America to "new" media like Twitter in China. Sara Mourad (Chapter 12)

explores the ways in which recent episodes of contentious politics worldwide, but especially with recent popular uprisings in the Middle East, have put emerging media at the heart of political struggles. In "Resuscitating "resistance" in the age of global climate change: Notes on media, culture and environmental discourse in Latin America" (Chapter 13), Patrick D. Murphy shows how the Ecuadorian state was a partner to activists using local media to actively resist the diktats of free market extremism, and considers similar struggles in Bolivia. In contrast, in "Power and transgression in the global media age: The strange case of Twitter in China" (Chapter 14), Guobin Yang showcases the ability of activists using social media to forge global alliances and influence the behavior of nation-states, even large, powerful ones like China. Murphy and Yang rescue the notion of resistance from the symbolic to re-center it in dissenting media practice under globalization.

Throughout the book, the theme of "orders and borders" enables a reevaluation of what power means and how it works contextually in an era of globalization. Rather than asserting power as a monolithic determinant of global communication processes and outcomes, contributors to this volume provide fine-grained explorations of important communication processes that enable a heuristic dialogue between theory and empirical research.

Notes

1 Oliver Boyd-Barrett, "Media Imperialism Reformulated," in *Electronic Empires: Global Media and Local Resistance*, ed. Daya Kishan Thussu (London: Arnold, 1998), 157.

2 See, for example, Fred Fejes, "Media Imperialism: An Assessment," *Media, Culture and Society* 3, no. 3 (1981): 281–89; Annabelle Sreberny-Mohammadi, "The Many Cultural Faces of Imperialism," in *Beyond Cultural Imperialism: Globalization, Communication and the New International Order*, ed. Peter Golding and Phil Harris (London and Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1997), 49–68; Joseph Straubhaar, "Beyond Media Imperialism: Asymmetrical Interdependence and Cultural Proximity," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 8, no. 1 (1991): 29–38. For a detailed description and analysis of the debate between proponents and opponents of cultural imperialism, see Marwan M. Kraidy, *Hybridity, or the Cultural Logic of Globalization* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2005).

3 Annabelle Sreberny-Mohammadi, "The Many Cultural Faces of Imperialism," in *Beyond Cultural Imperialism: Globalization, Communication and the New International Order*, ed. Peter Golding and Phil Harris (London and Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1997), 47.

4 Joseph Straubhaar, "Beyond Media Imperialism: Asymmetrical Interdependence and Cultural Proximity," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 8, no. 1 (1991): 29–38 reinterpreting Johan Galtung, "A Structural Theory of Imperialism," *Journal of Peace Research* 2 (1971): 81–117.

5 Armand Mattelard, "An Archeology of the Global Era: Constructing a Belief," *Media, Culture and Society* 24, no. 5 (2002): 600.

6 Toby Miller, Nitin Govil, John McMurria and Richard Maxwell, *Global Hollywood* (London: British Film Institute, 2001), 18.

7 Mike Featherstone, ed., *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity* (London and Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1994).

8 Anthony D. Smith, "Toward a Global Culture?" in *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity*, ed. Mike Featherstone (London and Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1994), 177.
9 Immanuel Wallerstein, "Culture as the Ideological Battleground of the Modern World-System," in *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity*, ed. Mike Featherstone (London and Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1994), 31.
10 John Tomlinson, *Globalization and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).
11 See Patrick D. Murphy and Marwan M. Kraidy, *Global Media Studies: Ethnographic Perspectives* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003).
12 Tomlinson, *Globalization and Culture*, 2.
13 Tomlinson, 1.
14 Tomlinson, 3.
15 Tomlinson, 18, emphasis in original.
16 See the editors' introduction in James Curran and Mying-Jin Park, *De-Westernizing Media Studies* (London: Routledge, 2000).
17 See Braman, S. "A Pandemonic Age: The Future of International Communication Theory and Research," in *Handbook of International and Intercultural Communication, Second Edition,* eds William B. Gudykunst and Bella Mody (London and Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 2002), 399–413; Curran and Park, eds, *De-Westernizing Media Studies*; Kraidy, *Hybridity*; Nancy Morris and Silvio Waisbord, *Media and Globalization: Why the State Matters* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001).
18 See also Curran and Park, eds, *De-Westernizing Media Studies*, 11.
19 Paul Fauconnet and Marcel Mauss, "La Sociologie, Objet et Méthode," *Grande Encyclopédie, vol. 30* (Paris: Société Anonyme de la Grande Encyclopédie, 1901).

Part I

Ordering borders

The transnational management of subjectivity

Nation-states and transnational attachments

Le Han

The nation-state has been the central concern in modern mediated communication, and the formation of modern nation-states is linked to the development of modern mass media.[1] Globalization complicates the process in which media images and techniques shape collective identity, as the multiple flows of people, images, finance, ideas, and technology across national boundaries have fundamentally changed the landscape of this world.[2]

The title of this part is "The transnational management of subjectivity," which means the issues of migration, identity, and media are considered beyond the framework of nation-state. The dynamics across national boundaries necessitates the examination of the mechanisms of ordering borders, controlling, and producing transnational subjectivity, which involves two major tendencies. One strand emphasizes the nation-state structures intervening in the politics of immigration, showing the tension between the national and transnational at the structural level, and denying the possibilities for resistance of the groups that travel across national boundaries—namely, the immigrant population. The other strand emphasizes the cultural resistance of immigrants without taking into consideration the global political structures, which are quite sophisticated and flexible.[3] It is necessary to see the dialectic tension between the structure and culture on the formation and management of subjectivity at the transnational level, so that the issue of immigrant identity is neither an essentialized concept nor a celebration of flexibility and hybridity.[4]

The two articles in Part I respond in different ways to the issue of managing transnational subjectivity. Geographically, these essays cover two regions with large immigrant population: the United States and Europe. In these essays we see different levels of border ordering practices, at the national and transnational levels. Hector Amaya's essay focuses more on the structural aspect of transnational subjectivity, emphasizing not only the corporate power (language commodification) and neoliberalism in marginalizing Spanish language media in the United States, but also monolinguistic politics and the associated discourse of equality. Myria Georgiou's essay, on the other hand, highlights the Arab-speaking groups as agents in negotiating their senses of belonging

with multiple regulating and ordering forces in Europe through media consumption. Both essays acknowledge the historical contingency and the actual trajectories in the changing positions of subjectivity and meanings of particular identity.[5]

Both essays focus on the formation of transnational subjectivity, in regulation and consumption of media. They represent two approaches concerning the formation of transnational subjectivity: the regulatory mechanisms and the negotiation/resistance of immigrant population. Viewed by immigrant populations, media images help to construct national identity and meanings of self, and thus subjectivity is based on the discourse of nation and its related "other."[6] The authors emphasize different aspects of diasporic and ethnic media. Amaya places language in the center of transnational subjectivity formation, using Spanish in the United States as an example. Georgiou focuses on media consumption among the Arabic-speaking population in a European metropolis and the formation of different senses of belonging. For both of them, language is one of the most important defining characteristics of an immigrant population, whether it is being marginalized in the name of equality or being used in strategic articulation of identity in resistance to the nation-states.

Amaya's essay addresses the centrality of language as control and regulating power of the nation-state regarding minorities. He exemplifies the approach of language centrality by examining Spanish and Spanish language media in the United States in relation to the intersection of nativism, immigration, and corporate power. For him, neoliberalism is a useful but inadequate framework for understanding the marginalization of Spanish language media, because it is not only a result of language commodification. He argues that the local version of liberalism, in association with a U.S. version of governmentality and the discourse of assimilation and equality (by using a single language) is an important ordering mechanism through which Spanish became a dominated language.

Georgiou's study, contrary to the focus of regulatory forces at the institutional level, emphasizes the subjectivity of immigrant populations in relation to multiple belongings through everyday media consumption. Based on focus group studies in London, Madrid, and Nicosia, this study finds that the Arabic-speaking audiences define meanings and boundaries of identity through media consumption of the Arabic transnational television, in which they try to position themselves in between different and conflicting cultural spaces, political systems, and citizenships. This study discusses banal nomadism as a transnational subjectivity in everyday practices, in media resources, and in their resistance to national politics. Banal nomadism questions national boundaries, challenges the nation-state and is used to resist the politics of exclusion.

The transnational arena is a space in which multiple forces are involved in producing and positioning subjects.[7] The two essays adopt such a perspective,

through which we can see the tensions between ordering mechanisms from the above and strategic articulations of immigrant identities from below. Ultimately, we need to understand that these two aspects always take place at the same time.

Notes

1 See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism (Revised Edition)* (London: Verso, 1991).
2 See Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimension of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).
3 See J. A. Drzewiecka and R. T. Halualani, "The Structural-Cultural Dialectic of Diasporic Politics," *Communication Theory* 12, no. 3 (2002): 340–66.
4 Ibid., 346.
5 See also Ian Ang, *On Not Speaking Chinese: Living between Asia and the West* (London: Routledge, 2001).
6 R. Shome and R. S. Hedge, "Culture, Communication, and the Challenge of Globalization," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 19, no. 2 (2002): 172–89.
7 Ibid., 187.

Chapter 3

Nativist liberalism and the disciplining of Spanish language media

Hector Amaya

On September 22, 2003, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) allowed Univision to purchase the Hispanic Broadcast Corporation (HBC) for 3.25 billion dollars. With the acquisition of the largest Spanish-language radio network, Univision—already the largest Spanish-language media corporation— became a media behemoth. Latino critics of the purchase pointed out that Latinas/os would be negatively affected because the sale would reduce the number of media options for Spanish speakers.[1] To make matters worse for Latinas/os, in April 2002, the FCC had approved the sale of Telemundo to NBC for 2.7 billion dollars, formalizing what was already clear, that the FCC's commitment to minority ownership was lip service only. The last betrayal by the FCC of its stated goal of providing the ground for minority ownership policies happened in March 2007 with the approval of the 12 billion dollar sale of Univision to Thomas H. Lee Partners, the Texas Pacific Group, Madison Dearborn Partners, Providence Equity Partners and the billionaire Haim Saban. All of these sales happened in a policy environment of deregulation and conglomeration that has eroded the FCC's ability and willingness to enact policies attentive to ethnic minorities and women, despite the existence of specific policies for non-English media (H.R. 3207 and S. 1563) and the FCC's repeatedly stated goal of fostering minority ownership.[2] The result is that, according to Catherine Sandoval, Latinas/os own only 1.15 percent of U.S. media. Dominated by Anglo Saxon or Latin American economic interests, Spanish-language media fail to service Latinas/os who must consume foreign programming instead of stories that speak to their experiences in the United States.

In the spring of 2010, Tim James tried to win the Republican primary to run for governor in Alabama. He came within 208 votes of the winner Robert Bentley. James' platform got a boost after he aired an ad stating: "I'm Tim James. Why do our politicians make us give driver's license exams in 12 languages? This is Alabama. We speak English. If you want to live here, learn it. We're only giving that test in English if I'm governor. Maybe it's the businessman in me, but we'll save money, and it makes sense. Does it to you?" James' nativist, English-centric proposal was framed within the context of the

economy, a rhetorical position that he emphasizes when he defines his clearly political position as a business decision. James is not alone. English-centrism is a constant feature in U.S. political culture. Earlier, in 2001, the *No Child Left Behind* reforms to education proposed and passed by the administration of President George W. Bush changed the title of the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs (OBEMLA) to the Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA). OELA's stated goal is to "Provide national leadership to help ensure that English language learners and immigrant students attain English proficiency and achieve academically."[3] Much like James uses business language to justify his position, bilingual education in the United States has the stated goal of integrating non-English speakers into English-structured labor and educational markets.[4] The majority affected by the political and policy expectation of linguistic assimilation are Latinas/os and Asian Americans, the two groups with the largest number of immigrants from non-English speaking nations.

I use these examples to draw attention to a significant problem Latinas/os face in the United States: Mainstream political and legal cultures have depoliticized Spanish and treat it as an undervalued commodity. This de-politicization sacrifices the social importance of Spanish for Latinas/os and other Spanish speakers, and naturalizes the domination of English over Spanish. As the examples already suggest, when Spanish is treated as a commodity, the market dictates who controls it and government agencies make sure the market's power is safeguarded in legal and policy frameworks. Last, because Spanish is undervalued vis-à-vis English, linguistic assimilation seems a reasonable expectation for Latinas/os.

Using global and Latino media studies, I treat the commodification of Spanish as a political issue and connect it to what I call "nativist liberalism." Understanding Spanish in relationship to nativist liberalism means placing Spanish in a historical framework that accounts for the rise of liberalism in modernity and the role language played in national formations, colonialism, and Eurocentric racism, issues that are central to globalization theory. Lastly, my intervention is inspired by the methodological and theoretical insights of Critical Discourse Analysis. These insights include the notion that language is a social practice and it is thus centrally concerned with context, location, time, and history.[5] As important, Critical Discourse Analysis is a critical approach and "instead of focusing on purely academic or theoretical problems, it starts from prevailing social problems, and thereby chooses the perspective of those who suffer most, and critically analyses those in power, those who are responsible, and those who have the means and the opportunity to solve such problems."[6]

The first section of this chapter interrogates the economic notions that are central to Spanish-language media and the construction of the Hispanic audience. This section also questions the economic reasons for English-language media to discriminate against Latinas/os and concludes that nationalistic

politics are present in how Spanish-language media and English-language media relate to Latinas/os. I begin addressing this issue in the next section by exploring the way language became central to national and colonialist enterprise in modernity. Attentive to Critical Discourse Analysis' insight that "discourse is structured by dominance," I argue that language is always already linked to national and transnational power dynamics that are political and economic in nature.[7] These evolve into local forms of liberalism. The following section expands on the particular links of liberalism to nativism in the United States. By nativism I mean the "opposition to a minority on the basis of their 'foreignness'"[8] and the strong affective investment in a nation that is defined in terms of ethnicity.[9] I do this by positioning language in U.S. liberal governmentality and propose that the term nativist liberalism explains how language is treated in U.S. political frameworks. The last section tests this theory versus the legal and political history of Spanish in the U.S. and its status as a dominated language. Each of these sections shows that Spanish, minority, diasporic, and immigrant language media often are technologies of power sitting at the intersection of nativism, immigration, transnationalism, and liberalism.[10]

Commodifying Spanish language media

Because of demographic and income growth, Latinas/os are often imagined as the "It" market and yet they are underserved by all media.[11] The fastest growing minority, eclipsing African Americans and quickly reaching 45 million, Latinas/os continue growing at a pace faster than any other ethnic group. Latino wealth is also quickly increasing. Since 1990, Latino wealth has been compounding at a rate of 8.2 percent, almost doubling the wealth growth of non-Latinos (4.9 percent). Latino buying power has grown from $220 billion in 1990 to $951 billion in 2007, an economic clout that is only surpassed by the economies of thirteen nations in the world.[12] Although with different degrees of mastery, 35 million U.S. residents speak Spanish and three-quarters of these are bilingual. The size and economic clout of Latinas/os should make this community a highly desirable market segment, but Latinas/os are severely underserved by mainstream media of any language. English-speaking Latinas/os are underserved by English-language media because of lack of programming and news reporting attentive to their needs. Spanish-speaking Latinas/os are underserved by Spanish-language media because programming is still dominated by imports from Latin America. Last, all Latinas/os are underserved by media in any language because of conglomeration and corporatism. The reasons why media have failed to serve Latinas/os are different but are also interrelated. In both, Spanish-language media and English-language media, Latinas/os are implicitly understood as foreigners, immigrants and, perhaps predictably, so has Spanish as a language been understood as foreign. This assumption is the ground for bad media economics and good nationalist politics.

Spanish-language media fail Latinas/os because their consistent identity is as corporate media that serve a niche market defined by transnational and immigrant populations. Spanish-language radio and television, originated as for-profit media, organized by entrepreneurs interested in constructing an audience by reaching an underserved segment of the American public. In radio, this meant programming that could reach working class immigrants from Latin American. Often in the early hours of the day, shows like *Los Madrugadores* (Burbank, California) in the 1920s put together programming that could only be defined as transnational.[13] The practice of targeting immigrants continues today. As Juan Flores and George Yudice note, Telemundo, the second largest Spanish-language television corporation in the United States, uses the slogan "Telemundo: uniendo a los hispanos" (Telemundo: Uniting Hispanics). Because it targeted immigrants, relied on assumptions of national duality, and compounded the diverse audiences based on Spanish language, this transnational programming has served, from the 1920s to the present, as a cultural incentive to concretize a diverse set of ethnic communities under the "Hispanic" audience banner (the term preferred by today's advertisers).[14] Today, though 50 percent of Univision's programming is made in the United States, primetime is still dominated by telenovelas from Latin America that fail to address the social, political, and cultural challenges of Latinas/os. The production of an audience that is at once transnational, immigrant, and homogeneous is thus the result of long-standing media traditions that are likely to continue for as long as Latinas/os are defined as audiences, as market segments, or as buyers.

English-language media simply ignore this one trillion dollar market and systematically marginalize the fastest growing minority from English-language media programming. Latinas/os are rarely the specific target of English-language media and are rarely employed in media industries outside Spanish-language media.[15] As I wrote elsewhere, Latinas/os account for roughly 5 percent of journalists, editors, and news staffers (NAHJ 2007) and less than 2 percent in radio newsrooms.[16] Severely underrepresented in news stories and in fictional narratives in television during prime-time, Latinas/os are an almost invisible segment in this age of market segmentation. Right now, there is not a single drama or comedy in primetime English language broadcast television led, written, and centered on Latinas/os. On cable, Latinas/os are part of ensemble casts and star in shows like *Lopez Tonight* (TBS) or *The Dog Whisperer* (National Geographic Channel). A relatively new cable channel Sí TV is beginning to make a space for English-speaking Latinas/os and bilingual Latinas/os, but its survival is still questionable. Given these examples of the type of participation Latinas/os have in English-language media, one may conclude that the almost one trillion dollars of buying power held by roughly 38 million English-speaking Latinas/os is practically ignored by English-language media.

Clearly, things are more complicated than simply painting a map of Latinos colored by their media presence in Spanish-language media and

English-language media. With new media, which further segment media usage, and new cable ventures like Sí TV, CNN en Español, FOX Deportes, and so on, the media landscape may quickly adapt to the new demographic and economic realities that Latinas/os represent. But the history of Latinas/os in the United States betrays this hope. As Dávila has commented on similar issues, Latino possibilities for progress will remain "confined by the exigencies of dominant notions of U.S. citizenship," particularly as these tend to "give preeminence to white, middle-class producers of and contributors to a political body defined in national terms."[17] I believe Dávila is correct, but would like to add that language is today the preeminent way in which Latinas/os are racialized.[18] Theorizing language in relationship to media, Latinas/os and the nation-state takes us further into explaining the inconsistencies of neoliberalism as an explanatory framework for the Latino media problems of lack of ownership of Spanish-language media and lack of representation in English-language media. By theorizing language I mean examining the particular ways in which language becomes an object of politics and, in the United States, it also means examining how language fits within liberalism and nativism. In the next section I show that language becomes an object of politics because it squarely sits on the fault-line, common in modernity, between nation and globalization.

Transnational media and language

Language is central to the complex ethnoscapes and mediascapes that characterize today's globalized world, transnational labor markets, and colonial processes. Spanish-language media is all of these things, simultaneously a product of the U.S. colonial expansion into Mexico, the colonization of Puerto Rico, the transnational labor markets that fuel immigrations from the South, and the dynamism and greed of transnational Latin American media companies such as Televisa, Globo, Venevisa, and Televisión Azteca. Because Spanish-language media is the result of this multiplicity, global media theory is key in understanding the power conflicts on which Spanish-language media was organized. Yet, there are analytic weaknesses to global media theory because language typically becomes subsumed under other analytic categories. We may assume that Mexican telenovelas participate in the formation of transnational communities in the United States, but we typically conceive of these communities as media communities, not linguistic or political communities. This section presents theoretical incentives to make language more central to global media analysis.

Ironically, one of the foundational ideas of global media is the correct assumption that linguistic communities are also expressions of political and legal communities. In *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson provides what could have been a theory of globalization, language, and media.[19] Anderson posits that the nation-state is a modular type of political organization that rose out of the advent of capitalism, the dissemination,

popularization, and standardization of vernaculars made possible by the printing press, and narrative technologies such as the novel and the newspaper. But this module is not only relevant to the nation: it also facilitates the rise of modernity and the world-system, as Immanuel Wallerstein, Anibal Quijano, and Walter Mignolo have suggested.[20] The very examples that Anderson uses can be easily re-appropriated as arguments about global media. For instance, he argues that religious languages of power, Latin, Classic Arabic, and Chinese, fostered regional political arrangements and that the erosion of these languages fueled the erosion of the religious political communities uniting these regions. However, versions of Arabic and Chinese became national, transnational, and imperial languages. Latin transformed the most, but at least five of the vernaculars greatly influenced by it—Spanish, Italian, French, Portuguese, and Romanian—became national, transnational, imperial, and/or colonial languages. Today, Arabic is the official language of twenty-six countries; Spanish is the official language of twenty countries; Italian is official in six nations; French is official in twenty-nine countries; Portuguese is official in nine; Chinese is in three; Romanian has official recognition in four nations. Although typically different from each other, vernacular versions of these official languages help concretize large, transnational communities, often joined by media, as in the cases investigated by Marwan Kraidy regarding Arab media, or Antonio La Pastina and Joseph Straubhaar regarding Portuguese.[21] Thus, the factors central to the concretion of a national imaginary, capitalism, vernaculars, and mass media, are also at play in the concretion of a world system organized not as an imagined, horizontal community, but as a hierarchical, Eurocentric, ethno-racial, and geo-political system. Language engenders horizontality and verticality, as in the ethno-racial hierarchies at the level of the nation and of the globe.

Complementing Anderson, Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein help us reflect on racially and linguistically produced hierarchies within the nation.[22] Balibar, in particular, theorizes the nation (with France as the model) in terms of what he calls a fictive ethnicity imagined around ideas of race and language. This fictive ethnicity is inscribed in narratives of origin and formalized in political and legal structures that are the basis for a national political economy that distributes resources based on race and language. The fictive ethnicity at the heart of most nations hence animates state formation. Balibar's fictive ethnicity and other similar theories of racialization are today the normal way in which we understand the nation-state, but the strength of these ideas seems to be in locating that race has been central to the formation of contemporary nation-states. Echoing Balibar's racial hypothesis, Michael Omi and Howard Winant, Clara Rodriguez, and Linda Martín Alcoff, among others, have used theories of race to explain the nation-state.[23] Omi and Winant propose:

> Racial theory is shaped by actually existing race relations in any given historical period. Within any given historical period, a particular racial

theory is dominant – despite often high levels of contestation. The dominant racial theory provides society with "common sense" about race, and with categories for the identification of individuals and groups in racial terms. Challenges to the dominant racial theory emerge when it fails to adequately explain the changing nature of race relations, or when the racial policies it prescribes are challenged by political movements seeking a different arrangement.[24]

It is because of the way we have understood race in the last couple of centuries that we have inscribed racial categorizations in the law and in basic definitions of citizenship. This is a basic tenet of critical legal scholars like Patricia Williams, Rogers Smith, Grace Hong, and George Martinez, who demonstrate how a significant part of the legal codifications of citizenship are, at least partly, based on race.[25] From laws of inheritance that precluded African Americans from accumulating wealth to taxation laws that constructed public education systems that reconstituted segregation, these scholars have thoroughly shown race to be at the center of the law and thus a defining feature of the nation-state.

But Balibar's second axiom, that a national fictive ethnicity is also organized around language, has been examined less often in media and communication scholarship. It is as if the strength of the linguistic tautology that a nation is a community joined by a common language were self-evident. Or, perhaps, it is as if the agonistics of race were unique while the agonistics of language were settled with the triumph of the nation-state. Balibar himself fails to engage with linguistic battles that have occurred and continue occurring in France and uses race as proxy for all the difficulties, troubles, and injustices that the nation-state normalizes. In Omi and Winant, Alcoff, and Rodríguez, language is one among other cultural markers that define the type of racialization that Latinas/os face. Sadly, and betraying everything we know about language, community, and self, Spanish is listed in the work of Alcoff and Rodríguez alongside dance, religion, or other cultural markers of significantly less importance. How can we, as a community of media scholars, believe that language codifies culture, cognition and experience while disregarding the importance of language to individuals and to the political life of communities?

In general, academic work on media, ethnicity, and race disregards linguistic conflicts and yet, as Norman Fairclough has shown in the Romanian context, linguistic conflict is central to the global.[26] At best, language difference is treated as a given or used as the basis for epistemological description, as when Dávila sets out to investigate Spanish-language advertising or Hamid Naficy engages with Iranian communities in LA joined by the consumption of media in Persian.[27] Spanish is quite important to Dávila, but in her work the political issues surrounding Spanish are reduced to intra-ethnic divisions between Dominican or Puerto Rican immigrants who are pitted against the

quasi-monopoly of Mexicans in Spanish language television. Dávila, for instance, describes focus groups where Latinas/os in New York City are complaining about the Mexicanization of Spanish-language television and specific complaints about the choice of music genres (e.g., Rancheras), accents (e.g., Mexican), and the lack of Afro-Latinas/os in most programming.[28] Similarly, in Naficy's work, Persian is both the ground for understanding the specifics of media consumption and the language that marks a sort of melancholic attachment to the past and to other geographies. In one of the most powerful anecdotes of human adaptation and flexibility that I have read in media scholarship, he describes how his daughter Shayda, who at age eight only spoke English, and his niece Setareh, who spoke Persian and German, had a moment of true communion while singing *The Little Mermaid* in different languages, English and German, and, more surprisingly, when Shayda was able to learn the German version of the song in the ride to the airport just before Setareh returned to Germany. As if to confirm the best and most tender aspects of humanity, they sang the German version together at the airport, deeply touching the adults whose lives were separated by an ocean.

I chose these anecdotes because these influential works of transnational media in the United States by Dávila and Naficy share a position on language, even if the anecdotes are on first inspection quite different. They both highlight what one may call the para-linguistic at the expense of the linguistic. Perhaps as a consequence, they both focus on the political complexities that revolve around these para-linguistic aspects of media, as opposed to the political complexities of language itself. In Dávila, media that serve to share language fail to create community because of the complex ethno-racializations that are part of multi-national languages. Thus, sharing Spanish is not the same as eliminating linguistic differences between Dominican, Puerto Rican or Mexican Spanish. Para-linguistic elements of language, such as accents, the race of the speakers, and the cultural musical forms that represent the link between nation and language, become politicized and presented as essential for community.

In Naficy, global popular media transcend language and become a para-linguistic way of communicating with others and even a way of forming strong bonds. Moreover, the strictures of language difference can be erased if we recognize mutuality, even if this mutuality is furnished by the processes of cultural imperialism that made Disney's film a media ritual for children in Germany and in the United States. Naficy concludes by stating the following: "The globalization of American pop culture does not automatically translate into globalization of American control. This globalized culture provides a shared discursive space where transnationals such as Setareh and Shayda can localize it, make their own uses of it, domesticate and indigenize it. They may think with American cultural products but they do not think American."[29]

In both cases, the particulars of language are an obstacle for forming community, but this obstacle can be or is solved by pop media or, differently

stated, by language defined as commodity. I am not using Dávila and Naficy as examples of bad scholarship. On the contrary, I am using them to illustrate the manner in which analyses of media are growing in complexity and sophistication and now recognize that processes of mediation are not only or even primarily about language. Indeed, some of the subtlest roles of mediation are para-linguistic and should be paid extra attention. These often require the most complex understanding of the intersection of aesthetics, politics, and ethics, hence the attention to delicate cultural gradations into which Dávila and Naficy delve. Dávila was quite astute at recognizing that though Spanish-language media could intellectually bring Latinas/os together, our affective relationships to language and nation were such that we cannot come together as a Latino community unless the para-linguistic is addressed. Naficy, from the opposite side of the equation, recognizes the power of affective bonds created by music, image, narrative, and ritual. But I suspect that Naficy would recognize the limitations of the bond he described as being created by the girls' recognition of each other through *The Little Mermaid*. It is quite hard to form a community without a shared language and learning *The Little Mermaid* in German is far from understanding the German language. Clearly, Dávila's criticism of Hispanic advertising is meant to show the weaknesses implicit in commodifying language. But it is also clear that defining the Latino community is not only the privilege of Latinas/os. We are constantly being defined by political and cultural majorities and Spanish stands as one of the key markers of our difference.

Language is the basis for community and on this Anderson and Balibar are correct. Neither Dávila nor Naficy would negate that while mediation is thick in terms of aesthetic and political complexities, the ground for these complexities is language and language is so important to communities that disregarding language is ultimately unwise. Yet, not much has been written on the relationships between languages, state-formation in the United States, and media, and the obvious connection multi-lingual nations have with transnationalism. In American scholarship or the American academy, this lack of work is a type of disavowal that obscures the way state-formation has meant organizing political and legal structures that systematically discriminated between languages and the media they use and need. Ironically, and to give more context to Dávila and Naficy's anecdotes, Spanish and German are two of the classic examples of legal and political linguistic discrimination in the United States. Today Spanish is facing huge political and legal challenges in the United States and Spanish-language media is no exception.

Language, liberalism, and governmentality

"Une langue, c'est un dialecte qui a une armée et une marine"
Maréchal Lyautey, qtd by Parkvall[30]

Anderson's seminal idea that a nation is an "imagined community" rests on the rather obtuse assumption that nations share one language. In the era of nation-states, monolingualism is either not existent or is the result of internal colonialisms. What Anderson is perhaps trying to get at is that the nation and liberalism have parallel histories and that imagining ourselves as communities was easier once we imagined ourselves equal before the law, and once we imagined that the law and the people spoke the same language. Much like language was used to colonize the Americas, Africa, and Asia, ethnic groups used language to colonize and give shape to mostly monolingual nation-states. Hence, language is part of two contemporary forms of thinking about government, state, and power. The linguistic revolution within Europe paralleled the Enlightenment and the rise of liberalism and contemporary egalitarian forms of thinking about government. Intra-coercion was the rule and communities faced each other until one vernacular became the norm. Typically, this vernacular was the state-vernacular. Simultaneously, European empires were conquering (Spain) or colonizing (England and France) huge territories in the Americas and using language as a blunt tool of coercion. So, the fact that today we take for granted the existence and desirability of monolingual states is the result of particular ways of thinking about governance, state, and community. Moreover, that today Western states accept the principle of egalitarianism common in liberal thinking while normalizing monolinguism is also evidence of the particular way in which Enlightenment thinking became the epistemological ground for the Western nation-state, masking the naturalization of national and transnational dominations. Language, in short, is part of contemporary forms of liberal governmentality, including those found in the United States, and internal and external colonialism.

In Michel Foucault's work, liberal governmentality is a particular type of governmentality that attempts to negotiate the tension between disciplinarity and consensus, or, otherwise stated, between social hierarchies and horizontality. While in other types of governance political power is relatively centralized—thus guaranteeing the state's stability through the monopoly of political authority—in liberalism political power is diffused through, among other things, the political franchise of citizenship.[31] Hence, in liberalism power is potentially unstable because the question of "how to stay in power" cannot be answered without referencing the will of the people.[32] In Foucault, the gap between disciplinarity and consensus is negotiated through ideas about security and law. As noted by political theorists since Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in liberalism consensus is the contractual result of citizens agreeing to abide by law in exchange for personal, economic, and social security.[33] Hence, in liberalism, as

Foucault notes, processes of consensus are regularly tied to discursive and legal practices that augment security. Foucault believes that this very characteristic, which he relates to the pastoral, is emblematic of liberalism and modern political cultures. The pastoral is a type of governance discursively constructed around the figure of the shepherd, whose goal is to lead his/her flock to safety and to take care of the flock's subsistence. "[Pastoral] power is fundamentally a beneficent power."[34] Liberalism continues this discourse of beneficent power, and constructs its raison-d'être in doing good ("a more perfect union"). This ethical self-justification is, however, part of its governmentality. To stay in power, the liberal state must fulfill the economic and social interests of the population, or, at the very least, of the population with political franchise. In the pursuit of this goal of imparting security through prosperity, the state becomes also the population's shepherd.

Although Foucault does not theorize language, his ideas offer insights into the way language may fit within liberal governmentality; these insights are clearer when Foucault's theories are complemented with Anderson. As I noted earlier, Anderson believes that contemporary national communities are possible because the nation is experienced and discursively constructed as horizontal camaraderie. Famously, this sense of community is partly the result of imagining ourselves ritualistically engaging in news consumption or, stated in line with my argument, in language sharing. This liberal sense of equality, hence, is articulated in language, which becomes an a priori for legal equality. Perhaps predictably, regulating language became a primary function of the nation-state. Updating Lyautey to fit within liberalism means proposing that a language is a dialect secured by law.

Taking cue from Critical Discourse Analysis, global media studies needs a theory of language attentive to locality and the way linguistic hierarchies are codified in law and/or secured through processes of hegemony. I further add that attention to immigrant, diasporic, or minority media in the United States ought to account for the particular brand of liberal governmentality that has become the basis for political, economic, and social organizing, and the way this brand of liberal governmentality helps structure political and cultural ideas about linguistic hierarchies that normalize linguistic and media policies. Assuming that Anderson's ideas on imagined communities, Balibar's theory of fictive ethnicities, and Foucault's insights into liberal governmentality are correct, the first step toward a local theory of language befitting of U.S. liberalism may read as follows: In liberal governmentality language laws and hegemonic political discourses must make possible horizontal camaraderies (Anderson) that are fictive and instrumental (Balibar) and are used in the reproduction of consensus (Foucault) while simultaneously these laws and discourses must occlude the manner in which language is disciplinary and hierarchical (Balibar and Foucault). In a second step one must further localize these ideas of liberalism and find out the elements of political discourse that, because of the particular histories of the United States and Latinas/os, have the ability to appear

horizontal while structuring hierarchies. Given the history of language policy in the United States, and the particular experiences of Latinas/os, it is safe to argue that the commodification of Spanish has depoliticized Spanish-language media. Because every other significant discursive ground that could produce social value to Spanish is foreclosed, imagining Spanish through the language of capital has long become the primary way of thinking about Spanish. This is evidenced in the commodification of Spanish-language media, but it was first manifested in the discourse of linguistic assimilation, which has been at the center of reasoning governing linguistic policies towards Latinas/os since the 1850s.

Liberalism U.S. style or nativist liberalism

Spanish speakers in the United States are bombarded with messages that suggest or demand linguistic assimilation and that assume Spanish is a foreign language. As Tim James illustrated the point in his English-only platform in Alabama, "We speak English. If you want to live here, learn it." As already mentioned, twenty-eight states have English-only policies, and cities and municipalities around the nation regularly enact local English-only policies. Linguistic assimilation is the norm. Contrary to analyses that simply embrace or reject assimilation on principle, here I want to connect the issue of linguistic assimilation with political principles that are central to U.S. political culture. In particular, I argue that part of the success and broad support for the idea of linguistic assimilation stems from the fact that monolingualism is conceived of as a basic form of horizontal community that locates speakers in similar relationships to legal and political cultures. Hence, monolingualism can be easily understood and defended in relationship to liberalism, particularly a liberalism inflicted with nativism or, borrowing from Ernst Hass, nativist liberalism.[35]

Nativist liberalism and monolingualism are complex political platforms and manifest themselves in very different ways, including unfortunate expressions of ethno/racial hate. Let me offer a quick illustration that impacts Latinas/os. Starting on September 15 and extending to October 2009, CNN dedicated a lot of time and institutional energy to exploring Latino reality. Since 1988, the 30 days following September 15 have been recognized as Hispanic Heritage Month. On October 16, Ruben Navarrete, one of CNN's Latino commentators, wrote a piece in which he argued that 47 million Latinas/os are quickly integrating into American life, becoming successful economic and political actors. Although Navarrete is a writer whom I consider to be conservative for his ongoing reliance on the discourses of assimilation, he apparently crossed a threshold with this celebratory piece. In the comments and opinions section at the bottom of the page, the huge majority of the comments (in CNN, this feature allows for only 50 comments) were anti-Latino and anti-Navarrete. One could quickly get to the core of the complaints. "Learn English" wrote

Mike, an immigrant of Indian descent. Similarly, Debra R. corrected Navar-
rete by stating that "Latinos will assimilate (sic) if they learn to speak, read,
and write English (sic)". Candi agrees ("learn the language") and so does
Frank B. ("You came here. We didn't go there. So learn the language and press
one for English"). J. R. pleads: "Yeah, we can't ignore you, it's too bad,
because I am sick of hearing people chatting loudly in spanish (sic), asking
me questions in Spanish, and having to hit the 'English' button all the time on
the internet, at ATMs and on the phone. I am sick of hispanics (sic), they're
everywhere … " Of the 50 comments, two were positive. Together, the negative,
angry comments evidence a sense of English as a national language—a felt
right not to have to select an English option, a desire for English to be the only
option (or an assumption that this is the proper order of things, the contract
these men and women signed). The comments also showed that to these men
and women, Spanish takes them away from feeling at home in the cities and in
the spaces they inhabit.

The responses to Navarrete are indicative of the way the expectation of
linguistic assimilation has traditionally been used in U.S. political culture. It is
an expectation that, at its kindest, promises that linguistic homogenization is a
requirement of economic, social, and cultural belonging. At its worst, this
expectation circulates as a political recourse that some communities will use to
justify privilege and to demonstrate irreconcilable differences between English
and Spanish speakers or current and previous immigrant populations. Giving
credence to Foucault's pastoral hypothesis, the sense of political threat acti-
vated by Spanish and Spanish-speakers translates into a rhetoric centered on
the notion that Spanish is a foreign language. If the flock, referencing
Foucault's metaphor, is defined by English, state beneficence is manifested by
forcing Spanish speakers to learn English. The same is common in nativist
rhetoric, which uses the other to over-valorize the native's location in the
nation-state. Ideas about how Spanish speakers renege on the privilege of lin-
guistic assimilation ("learn the language") confirm to nativists that the inef-
fable value of English is not for everyone, but for the exceptional. This
contradicts the sentiment that a common language offers horizontality and
equity in relation to law. Yet, this common sentiment depends on defining
Spanish as a political threat coming from outside the nation, a rhetorical move
that nullifies the possibility of re-defining Spanish as a native language, even a
political and linguistic right. My central point here is that, betraying U.S.
history, English is conceived as a requirement for establishing a horizontal
community similarly treated by law. These are nativist liberal positions that rely
on a narrow definition of ethno-racial national community to imagine equality.

Nativist liberalism empties out the political potential of Spanish, but this
process is not new. In fact, nativist liberalism is at the root of one of the most
benign assimilationist practices, that of bilingual education. In our long history
as a nation, which included Spanish speaking citizens from its beginning, and
which saw the imperial acquisition of Mexican territories in the first half of

the nineteenth century and the colonialist annexation of Puerto Rico in 1898, Spanish has been always been a problem for the Federal government, a problem that the education system has tried to solve. Only five years after California became a state, English became the official language of instruction and Spanish became formally marginalized. It should be significant to media scholars that the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo gave citizenship to Mexicans and that this citizenship included the protection of Mexicans' linguistic rights.[36] This protection was soon eroded by the establishment of English as the official language of the state—and of instruction. It should also be significant that the Jones Act gave citizenship to Puerto Ricans. This citizenship did not include language rights. In fact, English-only education policies dominated this island of Spanish speakers. It was not until 1948 that Puerto Ricans were allowed to use Spanish again as an official language of instruction. Hence, when California, Texas, Puerto Rico, and Arizona made English the language of instruction it meant the trampling of Latino U.S. citizens' linguistic rights.

Bilingual education has a long history in the United States, but throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries it was typically under siege by nativist English-centric political communities. Due in part to the civil rights movements, a federal policy finally emerged in 1968. Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act—known as the Bilingual Education Act—had an assimilationist goal from its beginning. Written to guarantee that Spanish speakers would quickly learn English, the Act meant to remediate the poor education of Chicano and Puerto Rican children. The numbers were indeed appalling: 89 percent of Chicanos did not finish high school in Texas and 87 percent of Puerto Ricans living in continental USA were also high school dropouts. Given these beginnings, it is not surprising to learn that bilingualist rhetoric of the last decades embraces the notion that education responsible to Spanish-speaking Latinas/os means using Spanish to teach English. In what is called subtractive bilingualism, "Spanish is used in bilingual education only in cases where the children are 'limited English proficient' (LEP) or 'English language learners' (ELLs)."[37] Alas, a vehicle for linguistic assimilation, bilingual education participates in the racializations and commodification of Spanish, legitimizing the sense that Spanish is the language of poverty, the reason why Latinas/os fail at school, and the ultimate cause of social and economic marginalization.

Conclusion

This chapter proposes that language can help us understand some enduring features of global communication in the modern nation-state. As the example of Spanish in the United States shows us, in modernity, language has been central to the ordering of the nation-state and to its concretion as a power structure for two key reasons: Language has played the role of cultural, social, and political border, and it is thus central to the fashioning of national

identities. As importantly, language helps order the nation by constituting ethnicized national hierarchies and by placing the language of one ethnic group above the rest. In the United States, these linguistic and political practices have given way to nativist liberalism, a contingent form of egalitarian political talk that assumes mono-linguism, assimilation, and the primacy of English over all other languages spoken in the nation-state.

In the present, the way nativist liberalism orders the United States by giving form to ethnic borders is manifested in the way political, legal, and media cultures treat Spanish as a devalued commodity. This is not only because neoliberalism has eroded the political roots of liberalism but also because nativist liberalism benefits from capitalist thinking. Commodifying Spanish is politics by other means and the corporate reorganization of Spanish language media easily exemplifies this point. In 2003, Univision buys HBC giving form to the largest Spanish language media corporation. In 2007, Univision is sold to yet another group of people whose commitment to Latinas/os is questionable. Ironically, when Univision was first being put to sale in 2006, the first suitor was Rupert Murdoch, the most powerful conservative broadcaster in America and the corporate leader behind much nativist anti-Latino propaganda as exemplified by the privileged voices of Bill O'Reilly and Glenn Beck. That is my nightmare. But the reason this is a nightmare situation is because we know, we truly know, that who owns media matters. That is why civil rights justice claims in media during the 1970s made minority ownership of media one of the cornerstones of media democracy and citizenship. Today, the FCC is not the same institution. Neoliberal at heart, the FCC also carries on the dirty work of nativist liberalism, preparing the ground for a depoliticized Latinidad, foreclosing the potential for a vibrant Spanish-speaking public sphere, and securing in the process the political marginalization of Latinos.

It is for these reasons that the commodification of Spanish must be seen as political, for it is within political and legal cultures that Spanish is reduced to its barest meaning, as a language that can be commodified through television and radio practices, and as a language that impedes Latino educational success, where education is narrowly defined as the entry point into labor markets. These very different results of linguistic commodification, I proposed, are partly the result of the way the nation form, the term used by Balibar, came to be. As Anderson notes, nations originate from a set of forces that included the rise of vernaculars, technological media innovations like the printing press, and the rise of capitalism. New media technologies and their effect on vernaculars in the fifteenth century were necessary for the philosophical, political, and religious revolutions that followed. Contemporary expectations of political equality can be traced back to the horizontal cultural and religious communities (Protestantism) that originated with the printing press. These expectations of political equality were given lasting form in the Western nation-state. Moreover, as the book became one of the first industrial commodities and as the

sixteenth century's colonialisms allowed for the capital excess at the root of most capitalist concepts, the module that Anderson discusses becomes entangled with colonialist and capitalist thinking. Resulting from this array of social transformations are social organizations that we now call the nation-state.

Local traditions of liberalism in the United States have shown and continue showing the same elements that Anderson discusses: a language community that defines equality in linguistic and market terms. This is why I call it nativist liberalism, a political platform constructed in alterity with the foreigner, the national and linguistic other, and a way of imagining the promises of equality in freedom overdetermined by race, nationality, and language. Latino history in the United States allows us to see how nativist liberalism has been at work in the last couple of centuries. Since the nineteenth century nativist liberalism shows in the shaping of educational policies that embraced English monolingualism as the preferred way of imagining social justice, economic opportunity, and legal equality. It shows again in the way Spanish language media have been given space in market frameworks, but Spanish is consistently pushed away from the discourses of politics and law that would define Spanish as a linguistic and cultural right. Today, Spanish language media are a commodity and this definition is inscribed in FCC policies. Today, Latinas/os working in Spanish language media embrace the market because barred from true liberalism, neoliberalism appears to be the only framework for equality.

Notes

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3 OELA. "Welcome to OELA's Home Page." *Office of English Language Acquisition* Website by U.S. Department of Education. Accessed October 14, 2010. *http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/index.html*.
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6 Teun A. van Dijk, *Racism in the Press* (London: Routledge, 1986), 4.
7 Wodak and Meyer, *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, 3.
8 Robin Dale Jacobson, *The New Nativism: Proposition 187 and the Debate over Immigration* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), xxi.
9 Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), xi.

10 I use "transnationalism" as a descriptor of processes that expand beyond one nation. These may include media flows from one nation to another; media production communities that work in more than one nation; or audiences that have strong cultural ties to more than one nation, such as immigrant audiences.

11 Arlene M. Dávila, *Latinos, Inc.: The Marketing and Making of a People* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Isabel Molina Guzmán and Angharad N. Valdivia, "Brain, Brow, and Booty: Latino Iconicity in U.S. Popular Culture," *The Communication Review* 7 (2004): 205–21.

12 Jeffrey Humphreys, *The Multicultural Economy 2008* (Selig Center for Economic Growth) (Athens: University of Georgia, 2008), 10.

13 America Rodriguez, *Making Latino News: Race, Language, Class* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1999), 29.

14 Juan Flores and George Yudice, "Living Borders/Buscando America: Languages of Latino Self-Formation," *Social Text* 24 (1990): 57–84; Rodriguez, *Making Latino News*, 39.

15 Chon A. Noriega, *Shot in America: Television, the State, and the Rise of Chicano Cinema* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000); Rodriguez, *Making Latino News*.

16 Hector Amaya, "Citizenship, Diversity, Law and Ugly Betty," *Media, Culture & Society* 32, no. 5 (2010): 801–17.

17 Dávila, *Latinos, Inc.*, 157–58.

18 García, "Racializing," 101.

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20 Walter Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000); Anibal Quijano, "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America," *Nepantla: Views from the South* 1, no. 3 (2000): 533–80; Immanuel Wallerstein, "The Rise and Future Demise of the World Capitalist System: Concepts for Comparative Analysis," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 16, no. 4 (1974): 387–415.

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25 Grace K. Hong, *The Ruptures of American Capital: Women of Color, Feminism and the Culture of Immigrant Labor* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006); George Martinez, "Legal Indeterminacy, Judicial Discretion, and the Mexican-American Litigation Experience: 1930–80," *UC Davis Law Review* 27 (1994); Rogers Smith, *Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in U.S. History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997); Patricia Williams, *The Alchemy of Race and Rights* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).

26 Norman Fairclough, *Language and Globalization* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 3.
27 Dávila, *Latinos, Inc.*; Hamid Naficy, *The Making of Exile Cultures: Iranian Television in Los Angeles* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).
28 Dávila, *Latinos, Inc.*, 38–41.
29 Naficy, *The Making of Exile Cultures*, 2.
30 Mikael Parkvall, *Limits of Language: Almost Everything You Didn't Know You Didn't Know About Language and Languages* (Wilsonville, OR: Battlebridge Publications, 2008), 311.
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35 In discussing the progressive movement, Ernst Hass uses the term "nativist liberalism" to describe similar political and economic ways of framing equality in the 1910s. Ernst B. Haas, *Nationalism, Liberalism, and Progress* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), 130.
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Transnational nomads

Articulations of subjectivity across diasporic mediascapes

Myria Georgiou

Introduction

> I can be whoever I want. I could have a character with you guys right now. Why do I have to say I'm British or Sudanese? I don't want to be anything. I'm a citizen of Mars. I don't think we should be asked [what we are]. Why don't they go and ask some British people?
>
> (London, Arab male participant, age group 18–35)

The concept of the "nomad" has gained new relevance across the social sciences in recent years. Bauman[1] has argued that nomadism best captures the meanings of subjectivity within the context of postmodernity. If the pilgrim was associated with the political project of nation-building within modernity, he writes, the nomad has become a concept that best captures political action and identity in current times. Not seeking a destination, but rather moving across physical and symbolic spaces of identification, the nomad only finds community momentarily and through ephemeral affiliation with other nomads. Along similar lines, Braidotti[2] sees in nomadism possibilities for new politics beyond the myth of unity associated with modernity's project of stable and bounded identities. The more nomadism has become associated with a challenge to the hegemonic system of power associated with the nation-state and more with potentials for new participatory and reflexive politics of belonging, the more criticism it has attracted. Peters,[3] among many, criticizes nomadology as a projection of a postmodern social scientific approach that privileges the experience of elites and conceptually marginalizes less fluid experiences of people whose life does not fit into a selective and elitist framework of mobility. While the debates for and against "the nomad" as a relevant concept for understanding identity and political action have reaffirmed a social scientific divide between conceptualizations of modernity and postmodernity, there is little evidence supporting either side's claims.

The present discussion takes place in the context of these intense conceptual debates around nomadism. Unexpectedly, and beyond the researchers' intentions, nomadism emerged as a significant interpretative category for understanding the findings of the study from which this chapter draws. In a study

with a transnational group of Arab-speaking adults living in three European capital cities, discourses of identity and citizenship merged around persistent and reoccurring articulations of subjectivity as nomadic. The relevance of nomadism, but also of its diverse articulations in a transnational and highly mediated context, is at the core of this chapter.

The discussion draws from Arabic-speakers' articulations of a sense of self as this has been recorded in focus groups in London, Madrid, and Nicosia. The participants who by no means fit within a neat category of a "cosmopolitan elite" represent an interesting case in studying nomadism. As they adopt nomadic discourses of the self, they simultaneously advance claims about the relevance of the concept in understanding current articulations of subjectivity, and they challenge some of its conceptual limits. They do so in three ways, which will be discussed further in this chapter. First, this group's cultural practices reaffirm some of the qualities associated with nomadic subjectivity, such as regular participation in transnational networks and access to diverse media worlds.[4] At the same time, and while following some cultural practices usually attributed to elites such as multilingualism, frequent travel and ownership of many different media, this group does not possess the financial capital of cosmopolitan elites. The third element of interest relates to the specific articulations of nomadism among participants. While demonstrating a reflexive individualism,[5] their nomadic discourse is not self-centered. Rather, it often reveals a reflexive response to politics of nationalism and of marginalization. More specifically, a significant number of participants develop a rational discourse of detachment from national communities, identifying instead as cosmopolitans and nomads. This discourse is often adopted in challenging the limits of national systems of citizenship and Eurocentric ideologies of cultural stratification. It is often linked to the construction of a reflexive symbolic space in which claims for recognition in the societies where participants live and beyond are made.

Here, I refer to the articulations of the nomadic discourse as *banal nomadism*. This neologism is used as a provocative means in trying to make sense of the meanings of nomadism, especially within the context of a highly mediated and politicized diasporic everyday life. In developing this discussion, I draw primarily from Deleuze, Guattari and Braidotti's conceptualization of nomadism. This literature is juxtaposed with the demotic[6] articulations of nomadism as these have been revealed during the study. In this context, *banal nomadism* represents an attempt to record and understand participants' articulations of their multiple positions as members (or non-members) of cultural and political communities within and across territories. The nomadic discourse challenges the ideological hegemony that locates the nation-state and western modernity at the core of humanity's progress. It does so, as it relocates knowledge in a transnational experiential context. As it will be shown, the advancement of a nomadic discourse reflects the group's experience, as much as the possibilities for imagining the self outside set structures of power.

The focus groups discussed here represent a major element of a cross-European research project that investigates the relation between transnational media consumption and Arabic-speakers' experiences of citizenship across Europe.[7] The present discussion focuses on one key area of the findings: the articulation of transnational subjectivity through media consumption. The discussion does not assume the continuity of a transnational Arab space. It draws from findings that demonstrate how this space is sustained in transnational communication, even if always with its internal contradictions and its internal power struggles. While the transnational Arabic space is fractured and made sense of from within the specific spatial, political, ethnic, gender, and generational positions participants occupy, the transnational reoccurrence of the nomadic discourse reaffirms the need to study mediated discourses of subjectivity in their transnationality.

Conceptualizing *nomadism*

The concept of *banal nomadism* proposed here draws from poststructuralist conceptualizations of the nomad, especially as this has been used to address the articulation of subjectivities in a global context. I refer to transnational subjectivity as the cultural and political position that participants take in their attempt to orient and locate themselves in the interconnected worlds they occupy. Transnational subjectivity is associated with people's personal experiences of travel, (re-)settlement and networked world of meaningful relations, as juxtaposed with their perceptions of systems of political and mediated representations that support or limit opportunities for participation in socio-economic, political and cultural spaces they occupy.[8]

Banal nomadism provides an interpretative framework for understanding a reoccurring discourse among the transnational group of participants. Words that emphasize individuals' dissociation with any national community initially appear as expressions of an individualist elitist cosmopolitanism. The emphasis on positioning oneself in "third spaces"[9] and beyond national binaries and oppositions reveals a nomadic orientation and often an individualistic project of identity. Nomadism, as discussed here, primarily draws from Deleuze and Guattari[10] and Braidotti's[11] poststructuralist analysis. Deleuze and Guattari argue that the nomad does not depart, like the migrant, from a specific milieu but rather moves at the same time that she remains still, as the nomadic space is a space of trajectories that cannot be captured by singular locations.[12] Nomadism is a resource through which the metaphysical fixity of representations, identities and history become unsettled. As Lowe and Shaw write: "the notion of nomadism interrupts the persistently binary schemas which tend to condition the way we read and discuss not only postcolonial literature but postcolonial situations in general."[13] As such, nomadism unsettles ideological and political frames: "[t]here are no longer any true or false ideas, there are just ideas. There is no longer any ultimate goal or direction, but merely a

wandering along multiplicity of lines of flight that lead away from centers of power."[14] Consequently, nomadism can potentially disturb set boundaries and ideological frameworks associated with relations of power associated to hegemonic systems of national citizenship, race, ethnicity and gender stratification.

Deleuze and Guattari's nomadism challenges the state apparatus and its associated ideologies of fixity through the ordinary and the banal. Not usually as organized political action, but mostly as a system of imagining and shaping subjectivity in a world dissociated from the arboreal organization of the nation-state and its machinery, nomadism presents a rhizomatic system of identification. Rhizomatic systems of knowledge, Deleuze and Guattari write, assume horizontal connections and trans-species connections which cannot fit within binary systems of organizing the world of knowledge and politics, such as those associated with the nation-state and its assumed clarity of *Us* and *Them*. According to the authors, the rhizomatic orientation of the nomad is a target of every state that sees the nomad as its enemy and a threat to the state's power and control.[15] The political and ethical orientation of the nomadic subject fosters a cosmopolitanism that can lay the foundations for new interconnections and alliances, Braidotti adds.[16] Or, as Noyes puts it, nomadism fundamentally opposes the empire "in precisely the same sense that it has been articulated since antiquity – as a social (dis)arrangement and a subjective (dis)order on the fringe of empire, as a regime of technological, social and conceptual innovations."[17] Nomadism is both embodied and normalized in mediated communication. For the nomad, politics of presence and cultural life spill outside the limits of the nation with diverse mediascapes providing links to a multiplicity of worlds, as well as to a deterritorialized sense of homeness. The unitary subject is replaced by the subject constantly in the process of becoming.[18] Mediated and imaginary mobility between cultural and political spaces that surpass and challenge the nation-state and its machinery of power are constitutive elements of the world of the nomad.

The banality and ordinariness of the nomadic ideological and mediated mobility becomes a counter-point to the fixity of banal nationalism and its reaffirmation through the national apparatus of power, including the media.[19] In Billig's analysis, solidarity and belonging become nationally defined through the reproduction of images of national fixity and ever-presence, such as those reproduced in media representations of "our" country, "our" football team, and "our" political leaders.[20] Nomadic ideological spaces emerge alongside – or inside – the highly diverse and transnational media environments. Mediated representations of a certain *we-ness* and one nation's ideological righteousness are always contested by representations of other sets of *we-ness-es* and other ideological righteousness parading in competing sets of media. As a result, ideological fixity and commitment to a singular truth become increasingly difficult to sustain.

The transnationalization of Arabic media worlds

While the European and Arab regions have a long and complex history of encounters, it is the postcolonial context of migration that frames our understanding of Arabic cultural and political presence in contemporary Europe.[21] There is no doubt that the long history of exchanges between Islamic and Judeo-Christian traditions, as well as between competing colonial powers, has marked ideological boundaries between the Arab world and Europe.[22] However, it is the close encounters between the two regions within modernity that primarily mark the complex space of Arabic presence and representation in Europe. Alongside the intensification of physical mobility from the Arab world to Europe in the last 60 years, symbolic encounters have grown. These have built upon previous colonial and postcolonial systems of communication and knowledge,[23] but also upon new forms of communication, such as those that have emerged in the vast and diverse space of satellite Arabic television.[24]

Arabic transnational television in Europe, especially after 9/11,[25] has become a highly political issue, especially as it has grown to constitute a major player in global mediascapes. In an inventory of transnational television, Abizu[26] recorded 13,570 television broadcasts by satellite throughout the world with Arabic language channels occupying the sixth place, perhaps the most significant place after the globally hegemonic languages (e.g. English predominates and represents 40 percent of broadcasts). Historically, transnational television has emerged and developed around geo-linguistic regions,[27] which have expanded with the spread of satellite technologies to reach large numbers of dispersed diasporic and migrant populations.

Satellite television has played a key role in the diversification of television viewing and consequently of spaces of belonging for transnational Arab populations. Events such as the uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia have provided recent examples of the significance of transnational television for national and transnational Arab audiences. The more the Egyptian government restricted access to Al-Jazeera during the 2011 uprising, the more popular the channel became, nationally and transnationally.[28] While Al-Jazeera's coverage of these events provides a lively illustration of its significance for transnational audiences, our study has confirmed that this network, alongside other news and entertainment Arabic channels, represents a daily staple for a significant number of Arabic-speakers living in Europe. The ordinariness and banality that characterizes the references that participants make to Arabic television, as well as to all different kinds of personal and group media associated with transnational spaces of communication, reaffirm the transnationalization of participants' everyday world.

On methodology

The present discussion draws from 18 focus groups conducted with Arabic speakers in London, Madrid and Nicosia. Six focus groups were conducted in

each city, forming two sets of single-gendered groups of three generations, aged 18–25, 26–45 and 46–65. Participants were selected on the basis of their self-identification as Arabic-speakers, a relatively neutral category that surpasses the tensions associated with identification on the basis of ethnicity, nationality or religion. The vast majority of participants were Muslim, alongside a small minority of Christians. Men and women are equally represented in the sample. Single gendered focus groups and bilingual interviewers of the same gender as the participants were chosen in order to provide the most accommodating environment possible. Class and generation are variables that are not equally represented as it has not been possible to measure and equally represent people of all different classes, generations and ethnic groups in each of the 18 focus groups. However, collected data about class or educational background provided important information helpful in understanding the variations in the manifestations of the nomadic discourse.[29] It is not possible to make generalizations in relation to class, gender and generations and Arabic-speakers' identity based in this study. Yet, and as will be demonstrated below, there is evidence of some correlation between participants' age and class position and their engagement with a nomadic discourse. While political and religious beliefs also seem to play a role in the construction of a sense of belonging among participants, it has not been possible to collect enough data to provide a meaningful analysis of this correlation.

The sample was selected with the use of the snowballing technique. Each focus group included six to eight participants and was conducted by trained interviewers, fluent in Arabic and in the host country's language. Focus group data was transcribed, translated to English and analyzed with the use of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). IPA aims to understand people's social worlds by focusing on their own perceptions, voices, and interpretation of a phenomenon,[30] while recognizing the researcher's role in the field.

The project focused on European capital cities as these are locations of intense and significant presence of Arab-speaking communities. While we make no claims of representativity, we aimed to reflect in each city's sample the ethnic diversity within the Arab-speaking communities living in the particular location. For example, in the case of London, participants came from all over the Arab world – from Sudan to the United Arab Emirates. In the case of Madrid, Moroccans predominated (Moroccans represent by far the largest group of Arabic speakers living in Madrid and in Spain).[31] In the case of Nicosia, the focus groups reflected the dominant presence of Lebanese and Palestinian communities in Cyprus. The analysis is structured within a transnational framework. The transnational continuity of Arab spaces of belonging emerged inductively during the study. What this means is that there have been significant continuities in the articulations of subjectivity across all three cities. Differences, which are mostly associated with the specific national dynamics and the ethnic composition of the sample, are discussed elsewhere and

especially in relation to participants' evaluation of systems of national citizenship and of regional media systems.[32]

Locating *banal nomadism*

A discourse repeatedly recorded among participants, *banal nomadism* emphasizes cross-border mobility. This mobility is primarily symbolic, though it is complemented by physical mobility and collective memory of physical mobility.[33] Nomadic articulations of subjectivity take two forms, as will be illustrated below. They either emphasize symbolic constructions of a home as more significant than physical ones, or they detach individual identity from ethnic affiliation. In both cases, a specific set of values and experiences takes over a sense of rootedness. A sense of commonality with other people who share the same symbolic spaces they do—especially through common communication practices—takes over ethnically bound and rooted identities.

Media and communications both frame and sustain nomadic discourses, as they provide tools for accessing distant and proximate others, guarantee consistency in the exchange of images and narratives of community and the self, and support a sense of individual control over participants' communication worlds. These are characteristics of the nomadic imagination associated with three subthemes of mediated nomadism discussed below. The first subtheme presented in the first section below focuses on media nomadism. It illustrates the ordinariness of a transnationally interconnected everyday. The second focuses on nomadic subjects' media literacy skills. This section illustrates the ways in which participants' constant mobility between different media environments informs their critical take towards both the media and hegemonic articulations of identity as bounded and singular. The third section engages with the internal diversity of nomadic discourses, shaped especially as a gendered, situated articulation of subjectivity within specific temporal and spatial frameworks. For many, nomadism becomes a tactic of managing experiences of exclusion, both from political and from cultural systems of representation in the countries where they live. In this case, a shift away from national discourses of identity becomes a way to claim recognition outside marginalizing and trivializing representations of Arabness and Islam in Europe.

The analysis proposed here recognizes that discourses of subjectivity do not directly translate into practice. However, the significance of discourse in framing relations of power and in constructing meanings through the use of specific forms of language[34] makes this a central discussion in an analysis of articulations of transnational subjectivity within European socio-cultural spaces.

Media *nomadism*

Significantly, an important shared characteristic among participants adopting a nomadic discourse is their rich and diverse media consumption. Across the

transnational group of participants, those adopting a nomadic discourse are more likely to regularly use a variety of media and communication technologies. They are most likely to watch diverse television channels originating in different geo-linguistic zones, but to also use online and other digital media for personal communication and for accessing information not available on television broadcasts. The everyday world of the nomadic subject is media rich and linguistically diverse with a tendency to include, alongside television consumption, use of blogs, Twitter and other media which are available in online environments only. Print press and radio complement the rich use of television and the internet and these tend to reveal nuances of participants' particular cultural capital (radio and the press tend to be used in order to correspond to specific political and consumption preferences). The media world of the nomad is perhaps best described by Castells' definition of mass self-communication:

> With the diffusion of the internet, a new form of interactive communication has emerged, characterized by the capacity of sending messages from many to many, in real time or chosen time, and with the possibility of using point-to-point communication, narrowcasting or broadcasting, depending on the purpose and characteristics of the intended communication practice. I call this historically new form of communication mass self-communication. It is mass communication because it can potentially reach a global audience, as in the posting of a video on YouTube, a blog with RSS links to a number of web sources, or a message to a massive e-mail list. At the same time, it is self-communication because the production of the message is self-generated, the definition of the potential receiver(s) is self-directed, and the retrieval of specific messages or content from the World Wide Web and electronic communication networks is self-selected. The three forms of communication (interpersonal, mass communication, and mass self-communication) coexist, interact, and complement each other rather than substituting for one another.[35]

Mass self-communication is associated with a networked individualism, which has grown to become a culture within network society and which "starts with the values and projects of the individual but builds a project of exchange with other individuals."[36]

Individualism is a strong element of the recorded nomadic discourse and builds upon media consumption practices that filter and organize participants' worlds. Having moved away from a communitarian discourse, nomads use the media rather than community organizations and structures to organize their socio-political micro-worlds. Associated with the structure and organization of the media, "individual choice" becomes both a way of making sense of the media and for understanding the world through a media lens.

It is the medium of the internet in itself that, perhaps more than any other, makes media nomadism possible: always available[37] and enhancing

individuals' sense of power to control the flow of information and the sources of information they turn to, it provides a common framework for nomadic subjectivity. Importantly, and while other internal differences in this group associated with class, age and generation fragment diasporic experience, the multi-modality and multi-nodality of online communication provides a shared platform for individuals in constructing their nomadic discourse. While the socio-cultural realities that shape nomadic imagination cannot be fully reflected in mediated communication, the sense of being in control of information and communication associated with new media has a significant symbolic role in supporting this imagination. New media environments allow participants to construct and share discourses of subjectivity around a deterritorialized and mediated sense of self.

As the space of satellite television becomes increasingly similar to online media—i.e. rich, diverse, fragmented, multilingual and deterritorialized—it often plays a similar role to that of the internet in constructing a sense of homeliness associated with symbolic rather than physical spaces. As two participants in the London group say:

> I have never made an active effort to watch Arabic TV at home but whenever I'm travelling with work and in a hotel the first thing I do is look for the Arabic channels on the hotel TV.
>
> (Males, 18–25)

> [I watch *Bab al-Harrah* because it] is a soap that no matter where you are, what country you are in, Western or Middle Eastern, people are all watching it at the same time … all my cousins watch it in Iraq and in the USA and Germany.
>
> (Females, 18–25)

The richer and more diverse the media world of individual participants, the more they appear to resist rooting. It is no coincidence that most participants adopting the nomadic discourse regularly use different kinds of media. A highly mediated everyday is associated with the reoccurrence of participants' unease to define their subjectivity within singular and bounded cultural and political spaces.

Nomads, young, and media savvy

Against fixity, participants adopting the nomadic position project a complex, unstable and multi-positioned subjectivity. The multi-positioned subjectivity, which projects an individual space of belonging outside political and geographical boundaries, is a manifestation of the nomadic discourse most often observed among participants of a younger age. Importantly, and as the words of the individuals above and below show, younger people are more likely to

adopt the nomadic discourse. While the correlation has been observed among the sample in many cases, we did not find significant evidence that links nomadism with class.

> I say I'm Lebanese Palestinian living in London but not I'm Lebanese and not Palestinian or not from London. Nowadays, a person can be million things at the same time, million citizenships, have more than one job, no more this or that.
>
> (London, Females, 18–25)

Locating the self across space and within a range of systems of identification, nomadic subjects appear as reflexively aware of an unstable subjectivity conditioned to temporal, spatial, political and social change.

> I introduce myself according to where I am and with who I am.
>
> (Madrid, Females, 18–25)

> My culture has so many ingredients: Spanish, European not Spanish, Arabic not Islamic, Islamic not Arabic, Syrian and human … I can't say that I'm from one place only otherwise I'll be lying. I have to say everything; I have to include all Spanish, Arabic, European, Syrian, and Islamic identities. If I say only one identity then I feel I didn't reflect the whole reality.
>
> (Madrid, Females, 18–25)

The nomadic discourse is both reflected and shaped in what appear as high levels of media literacy. Media literacy is not exclusively "property" of younger people, as shown below. With access to a range of media representing various cultural and ideological positions and linguistic environments, nomadic subjects also casually and regularly move between media environments. With mobility between different media being constant, banal and ordinary, they use the media not only for information and entertainment but also for constructing spaces of belonging between the interconnected spaces of their transnational life.

> I try to watch as many Arabic channels, plus Al-Jazeera English and BBC, and also Algerian channels. I also watch French television because my family live there [in France].
>
> (Nicosia, Males, 46–65)

> Even if I like Al Jazeera, I need to collect my own opinion based on flicking [through the channels?].
>
> (Nicosia, Females, 26–45)

Mobility between media spaces is associated with a reoccurring reflexive individualism. In their diverse media consumption many participants aim to evaluate and control the abundance of information available to them.

> Personally I don't have loyalty to any channel. You use more than one source but it's not like if something is reported in one channel I think this must be true.
>
> (London, Males, 46–65)

> I don't trust Western nor Arabic media 100%. Every channel wants me to see events as it is considered by its agenda, every channel is reflecting its own politics.
>
> (London, Females, 26–45)

As suggested by Deleuze and Guattari, within nomadic imagination there are not singularly defined true or false ideas; there are just ideas.[38] As the nomadic participants reject unquestioned loyalties towards a single system of ideas or institutions, they wander along multiple spaces that, according to Deleuze and Guattari, can lead them away from centers of power. There is evidence that new possibilities for affiliation (though not always politically progressive according to the norms of the host country) open up through the diverse mediascapes participants occupy:

> I do affiliate with this concept of the global Ummah, through the media and I never used to have that type of affiliation or association. I think that has developed recently.
>
> (London, Males, 18–25)

Diverting discourses, nomadic commonalities

Different manifestations of nomadism reveal the links between power and discourse. For economic migrants, nomadic discourse is framed within the context of a transnational economic life. In these cases, nomadic imagination does not turn against but it incorporates the migratory experience. This includes a reflexive awareness of the global political and economic systems, which define limits of their subjectivity:

> My country is where I can gain enough money to eat.
>
> (Cyprus, Males, 46–65)

This kind of discourse can be counter-posed to a different manifestation of nomadism primarily associated with middle-class discourses of mobility as a celebrated privilege. As revealed through the examples below, nomadism as a

celebration of individuality and a cosmopolitan orientation surpasses the limits of age, especially for professionals who are used to moving across boundaries.

> I feel I am Lebanese and Palestinian but only in a part of me. I am Cypriot but only in a part of me also. I don't feel I completely belong to one place. I belong to a certain community of people: like minded people. Young people like me who travelled, have the same values. I don't feel I have to belong to a certain place.
>
> (Nicosia, Females, 26–45)

> I don't consider myself immigrant, I don't like this feeling. I feel I am an international citizen.
>
> (Nicosia, Males 46–65)

The words of the two Nicosia participants reflect a cosmopolitan imagination and a political orientation towards a cosmopolitan humanism,[39] which at the same time reveals an organic association between deterritorialized middle-class transnational subjectivity and cosmopolitanism. Delanty argues that the cultural dimension of cosmopolitanism consists in the creation and articulation of communicative models of world openness through processes of self-transformation, perhaps similar to those observed above. In self-transformation, he argues, new cultural forms take shape "where new spaces of discourse open up leading to a transformation of the social world."[40]

The link between self-transformation and changes of a social world is best captured in the association observed between the nomadic discourse and participants' resistance to stereotypes and social marginalization, which often spills outside the specifics of class. The territoriality of national citizenship reproduces systems of cultural stratification that the nomadic discourse resists:

> Being Arab and Muslim, we are seen as different, we try and integrate but they make you feel like you are intruding.
>
> (London, Females, 46–65)

> Before 9/11, the Arab Muslim, represented by the Moroccan, was just a simple worker who immigrated looking for a job opportunity, but after 9/11 and the Madrid attacks (in 2004) he has become something else in the eyes of the Spanish society: he's now rather considered as a danger to the public. And now the Arab/Muslim feels like a persona non grata.
>
> (Madrid, Males, 26–45)

In these words participants express their disappointment with dominant public and mediated representations of Arabs and Muslims. The nomadic discourse

reflects their selective engagement with European and national systems of representation:

> For me the idea of citizenship, media, identity, is fluid and constantly negotiated on a day to day basis. I share your enthusiasm for Britain, I wouldn't say love. I consider myself British but I consider myself many things and I have multiple identities.
>
> (London, Males, 18–25)

The same nomadic discourse of being in many places of belonging and accommodating each one's uniqueness is often expressed, especially among the youngest participants.

> I can be both with no problems. This "or" is wrong and it should be here, it is wrong to ask if you are Arab or Spanish, you can be both.
>
> (Madrid, Females, 18–25)

> I was born in Africa and also my dad. He grew up there so we have the African cultures and I'm Lebanese and I came to London. I have been here for 13 years, not much. So I'm everything. I feel very British sometimes, I feel very Arabic sometimes, I feel a bit African sometimes but it is all of them in one.
>
> (SA (Lebanese), Female, 18–25)

The above extracts from the focus group discussions represent only a fraction of the rich material collected showing some of the ways in which a sense of a complex subjectivity emerges out of the ordinariness of symbolic and physical mobility. This is the same group involved in intense and diverse media activity.

Often the critical take to national systems of citizenship associated with the younger media savvy generation takes a distinct gendered turn. For many female participants, national systems of representation are some of the most powerful systems for the reaffirmation of the stereotype of the Muslim Arab woman as disempowered and repressed. The process of *Othering* associated with stereotypical representations of Muslim women as voiceless is often seen as a source of exclusion:

> They would say that any problem I have is because I'm a Muslim … to them, I have problems because I'm a Muslim, wearing hijab and when I leave my religion and take off my veil then for sure I will not have any more problems.
>
> (Madrid, Females, 18–25)

A sense of frustration associated with representations of the veil is expressed by many young female participants. In a small number of cases, young women

explained how they decided to start wearing the veil as adults. Their choice can be interpreted as an attempt to turn a symbol of cultural particularism often pathologized within Eurocentric political discourses into a demonstration of a particularism, which is compatible with their cosmopolitan orientation. Reclaiming gender symbols associated with either stereotyping or trivialization of Arab particularism, some of these women aim to provide evidence of transnational agency, which is located in specific places but which is not restricted within them.

As *banal nomadism* demonstrates participants' attempts to locate their agency within European environments, it supports their efforts to sustain a reflexive space of multiple trajectories.[41] The numerous, diverse and conflicting systems of representation that open up in transnational media spaces redefine the limits of identification, sometimes freeing participants from their dependence upon territoriality, the nation-state, and its Eurocentric ideologies. It is in these messy and anarchic communication spaces that the nomadic discourse becomes a naturalized and ordinary discourse for identity construction beyond essentialist hierarchies associated with cultural, racial and religious stratification.

Conclusions

Banal nomadism promotes a new territoriality where presence and recognition are claimed *across* political and temporal boundaries. This discourse represents an appropriation of the rationality associated with liberal democratic politics, as currently shaped in the context of intensified cross-border communication. *Banal nomadism* is expressed as an amalgam of cultural particularity and a reflexive individualism, which is more compatible with the liberal individual(-istic) citizenship than with a culturalist discourse of community. Obtaining this position, participants demonstrate, at least in part, their privileged position. While this nomadic and reflexive subjectivity does not come out of an elitist cosmopolitanism, it is still the outcome of a cosmopolitan experience and imagination enabled by intense mediated and physical mobility. The present case study also demonstrates the ways in which *banal nomadism* and cosmopolitan imagination are not owned by elites alone. The boundaries of a "cosmopolitan social capital" partly shift as symbolic and physical mobility intensifies in global times. As argued by Hannerz,[42] involuntary cosmopolitanism and inescapable nomadism can be results of experiences that are not fully dependent on financial capital.

The nomad discussed in this chapter is not the beautified nomad of postmodernity; she is the transnational subject who cannot but be a nomad. As she seeks a space of representation she also seeks a space of recognition.[43] Systems of citizenship in most western democracies still struggle, or even resist, recognition of people whose cultural and political affiliations cross territorial boundaries. *Banal nomadism* reflects a possibility for new forms of citizenship,

as these are often articulated in media platforms and when transnational sub-
jects attempt to reconcile their cross-border attachments and their located in
nation-states life. While the growing cosmopolitan citizenship literature has
addressed the challenges the nation-state faces as physical and mediated
mobility increase,[44] national systems of citizenship stubbornly ignore media
and communications. Yet, evidence shows that transnational media become
more than mere tools used to find out what is going on in the world. They
become platforms for communicating with people in close proximity and dis-
tance and for seeing the self and others from different perspectives. Thus, the
nomads discussed in this chapter depend on their rich media worlds when
seeking representation and recognition.

Nomadism represents one of the emergent and persistent forms of "globali-
zation from below" associated with the diversification of global communica-
tion. It is powerful, and for many people it offers a singular tool for
articulating their sense of self. It is often individualistic and at time elitist, yet
it is also reflexive about the limits of the self, the community and the nation.
The nation especially becomes a category constantly under erasure (though
never fully erased). As spaces of (mediated) belonging constantly cross the
boundaries of the nation-state, reflections on how identities can still be con-
tained in national territoriality are raised anew. As such, nomadism does not
only engage with what identity and citizenship currently represent, but also
with what they could be.

Notes

1 Zygmunt Bauman, "From Pilgrim to Tourist – Or a Short History of Identity," in
   Questions of Cultural Identity, eds Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (London: Sage,
   1996), 18–36.
2 Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).
3 John Durham Peters, "Exile, Nomadism, and Diaspora: The Stakes of Mobilty in
   the Western Canon," in *Home, Exile, Homeland: Film, Media, and the Politics of
   Place*, ed. Hamid Naficy (New York: Routledge, 1999), 17–41.
4 Rosi Braidotti, *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics* (Cambridge: Polity, 2006).
5 Bauman, "From Pilgrim to Tourist."
6 Gerd Baumann, *Contesting Culture: Discourses of Identity in Multi-Ethnic London*
   (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
7 This chapter draws from the cross-European project *Media & Citizenship: Trans-
   national Television Cultures Reshaping Political Identities in the European Union.*
   This project has received funding from the European Community's Seventh Framework
   Programme FP7/2007–13 under grant agreement n° 217480. The research team is a
   consortium of five European universities (consortium leader: C.Slade). The author
   had led the team conducting research in London, Madrid, and Nicosia.
8 See similar conceptualizations in Deborah A. Boehm, "Gender(ed) Migrations:
   Shifting Gender Subjectivities in a Transnational Mexican Community" (San Diego,
   CA: Working Papers, The Centre for Comparative Immigration Studies, 2004);
   Pnina Werbner, "Global Pathways: Working Class Cosmopolitans and the Creation
   of Transnational Ethnic Worlds," *Social Anthropology* 7, no. 1 (1999): 17–35.

9 Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994).

10 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (London and New York: Continuum, 2004).

11 See Braidotti, *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics*and Braidotti, "Nomadism: Against Methodological Nationalism," *Policy Futures in Education* 8, no. 3–4 (2010): 408–18.

12 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*.

13 Richard Loweand William Shaw, *Travellers: Voices of the New Age Nomads* (London: Fourth Estate, 1993), 47.

14 Philip Goodchild, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari*, An Introduction to the Politics of Desire* (London: Sage, 1996), 2.

15 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*.

16 Braidotti, *Transpositions*.

17 John K. Noyes, "Nomadism, Nomadology, and Postcolonialism: By Way of Introduction," *Interventions* 6, no. 2 (2004): 161.

18 Braidotti, *Transpositions*.

19 Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995).

20 Ibid.

21 Philippe Fargues, "Arab Migration to Europe: Trends and Policies," *International Migration Review* 38, no. 4 (2004): 1348–71.

22 See for example, Ali El Kenzand Samir Amin, *Europe and the Arab World: Patterns and Prospects for the New Relationship* (London: Zed Books, 2005).

23 Tarik Sabry, *Cultural Encounters in the Arab World: On Media, the Modern and the Everyday* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010).

24 For more, see Marwan Kraidy, *Reality Television and Arab Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Naomi Sakr, "Diversity and Diaspora: Arab Communities and Satellite Communication in Europe," *Global Media and Communication* 4, no. 3 (2008): 277–300.

25 Marie Gillespie, "Transnational Television Audiences after September 11 2001," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 32, no. 6 (2006): 903–21.

26 Josu Amezaga Albizu, "Geolinguistic Regions and Diasporas in the Age of Satellite Television," *International Communication Gazette* 69, no. 3 (2007): 239–61.

27 Jean K. Chalaby, *Transnational Television Worldwide* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005).

28 Wadah Khanfar, "U.S. Viewers Seek Al Jazeera Coverage," *Al Jazeera*, February 1, 2011, http://english.aljazeera.net/indepth/opinion/2011/02/201121121041735816.html.

29 Each participant was asked to fill in a questionnaire providing basic demographic information about themselves and some information about their media use. The questionnaire was filled at the end of each focus group.

30 Michael Larkin, Simon Watts and Elizabeth Clifton, "Giving Voice and Making Sense in Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis," *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3, no. 2 (2006): 102–20.

31 L. Navarro, *Contra el Islam* (Madrid: Almuzara, 2008).

32 See for example a series of articles in association with the "Media & Citizenship" project published in *Journalism: Theory, Practice & Criticism* 11, no. 6.

33 The collective memory of mobility is associated with the diasporic condition as discussed in detail by Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* (London: UCL Press, 1997).

34 For more see Stuart Hall (ed.) *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (London: Sage, 1997).

35 Manuel Castells, *Communication Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 55.

36 Castells, *Communication Power*, 362.

37 At least to the group in question.
38 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*.
39 Lilie Chouliaraki, "The Mediation of Suffering and the Vision of a Cosmopolitan Public," *Television and New Media* 9, no. 5 (2008): 371–91.; Nick Stevenson, *Cultural Citizenship: Cosmopolitan Questions* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2003).
40 Gerard Delanty, "The Cosmopolitan Imagination," *Revista CIDOB d'Affers Internationals* 82, no. 3 (2008): 222.
41 Doreen B. Massey, *About Space* (London and New York: Sage, 2005).
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Branding nations

Re-imagining communities in neo-liberal states

Branding

Between national boundaries and capital flows

Andrew C. Crocco

It has become increasingly clear in recent decades that the peripatetic movements of media, capital and migrants re-imagine communities in novel ways. It is less clear how these restless objects of global communications erode, reinforce, or reconfigure national boundaries. The nation as an imagined community is in some ways ephemeral, analogous in contemporary terms to a commercial brand. Re-imagining the nation, to keep it fresh and contemporary, or relevant, as marketers prefer, has unmistakably real material consequences. The following essays suspect that national branding campaigns do as well. Paula Chakravartty, Anikó Imre and Koichi Iwabuchi all make clear that we must interrogate the spatial and material dimensions of nation branding campaigns to better understand the relation between texts and territories, promotions and populations.

Space and perspective within the global economy, what Appadurai called "-scapes," remains a good jumping off point.[1] Branding campaigns operate under a social production of space logic to inspire flows of capital and labor that transform physical territories. Working from the perspective of dominant political and economic interests, branding campaigns reframe the way audiences internal and external to the nation understand life within its borders. While Appadurai reminds us that the message is not always interpreted as intended, nation branding attempts to clearly define that which was muddled, to rearticulate the message as well as the context in which it is received.

Branding serves the expansion of capital markets by redefining national boundaries to demarcate investment opportunities and zones of potential capital accumulation. Nation branding creates "imagined worlds" (to borrow another Appadurai phrase) where the primary goal is to attract capital rather than enhance the well being of its citizens.[2] In India, the news and business media have suppressed accounts of growing poverty in favor of a national brand based on the growth of the free market. In Romania, where branding has redefined the homeland to foster loyalty, affective attachment to the nation is leveraged as a mechanism for attracting foreign wealth. In contemporary Japan, branding re-imagines the nation as a space of ethnic purity, while capitalizing on this fictive image by exporting it abroad in the form of cultural

commodities. In each, branding is more than a social construction of an already imaginary nation. It is a spatial strategy with real material consequences.

Paula Chakravartty's "Media, modernity, and inequality: *Aam Admi* in India Inc.," examines the relationship between an expanding media landscape and the public debate about poverty, inequality and inclusion in an emergent "global India." Commercial media as an industry has induced a "public amnesia" about the scope and scale of poverty in service of the government's chosen public relations agenda. With inequality elided, branding campaigns trumpet a new national identity as the "fastest growing free-market democracy" in the world.

While consumer culture has not simply supplanted democratic citizenship, the business press and news media are implicated in promoting corporate interests in the march towards market capitalism. Chakravartty sees nation branding as a political attempt to institutionalize corporate lobbying in national development. New theoretical frameworks must be developed if we are to understand the relationships between government, corporate sector, and news media in the context of postcolonial India.

Anikó Imre's "Old nations, new brands: Marketing intimacy in the new Europe" asks how branding practices reconfigure ideas of loyalty and nationality. Under market logic, nations can recreate themselves through carefully crafted campaigns designed to inspire "loyalty beyond reason." This fuzzy feeling of in-group self-confidence eschews participatory politics, along with the conflict it necessarily entails. Imre identifies this as a kind of postnational, postpolitical patriotism that inspires allegiance to an imagined nation, without the messy governing work of allocating resources, opportunities, and wealth.

So far as branding is concomitant with an assessment of quality, certain European nations will continue to be privileged at the expense of others. As Imre's study of Romania demonstrates, governments that attempt to upgrade national brands risk alienating citizens who believe their interests are betrayed for those of the global marketplace. A hardened division between "us" and "them" is often the result, with domestic groups enforcing and asserting a unified national identity. The gains of branding in Romania are a more jingoistic public and a reinforced power disparity with respect to regional neighbors.

Koichi Iwabuchi's "Culture and national border administration in 21st-century Japan" examines the coexisting impulses to control both the inflow of people and the outflow of cultural commodities in Japan. In response to accelerated globalization processes, nation-states employ media and cultural industries to re-order national borders. The perceived threats of globalization have been confronted with a "reactionary longing" for the safe and familiar that derides Japanese multiculturalism initiatives as divisive and dysfunctional. Multi-culturalism, as a project to integrate marginalized populations and migrants, is all but dead at the national level.

Japanese leaders attempt to redefine Japan as ethnically exclusive out of economic necessity within an increasingly competitive global marketplace. State policy has shifted to promote the export of a homogenous/authentic image of the Japanese people as a way of solidifying national borders against migrant ethno-flows. Iwabuchi calls this "brand-nationalism." The revanchist move to reclaim Japan as an ethnically pure homeland is carried out within the regulation of media spaces regarded as routes of migratory and cultural commodity traffic.

Read together, these essays help us understand the multidirectional reach of nation branding projects. Nation branding is every bit as consequential for the transformative logic it imposes on subjects within its borders as it is for audiences without. As a spatial tactic, branding reimagines, reshapes and reorders populations within borders defined by imagined worlds of ethnically, economically or religiously pure communities. We have only begun to understand the material consequences of these transformations.

Notes

1 Arjun Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy," *Theory, Culture and Society*, no. 7 (1990): 295–310.
2 Appadurai, "Disjuncture," 297.

Chapter 6

Media, modernity, and inequality
Aam Admi in India Inc.

Paula Chakravartty

Introduction

> Heralded as the best country to be an investor by *Newsweek* 2004, India is likely
> to emerge as one of the largest consumer markets in the world. On an average,
> 30–40 million people join the consuming class every year. Political empowerment
> and economic trickle-down have fuelled ambitions and aspirations in more Indians
> than in any other period in history.[1]

As a media practice, nation branding in India as elsewhere takes place at the
blurring boundaries of celebrity-infused promotional culture and the breathless
24-hour news cycle. The tagline for India Inc. as the "Fastest Growing Free
Market Democracy" attempts to distinguish itself from Communist China, its
fiercest rival, highlighting the "stability and durability of the political system"
as its competitive edge in garnering foreign investment.[2] As we enter the third
decade of the era of economic reforms, however, invocations of the fantastic
growth rates of India Inc. must ultimately contend with questions of inequal-
ity, or more bluntly, poverty as expressed through the interests of "*aam admi*"
(the common man). World Bank estimates put the percentage of India's
1.15 billion citizens living below the poverty line at 42 percent, while a range
of studies have found that the real figure falls somewhere between 50 to
77 percent of the overall population.[3] Anthropologist Arjun Appadurai
describes urban inequality in everyday life in neo-liberal (or post-liberalization)
urban India as a form of "financial apartheid," marked by striking spatial and
material inequalities.[4] In an essay titled "The Republic of Hunger," Indian
economist Utsa Patnaik argues that rural poverty rates in the 2000s were
unprecedented, and goes on to state that "never before in the independent
history of our country have we seen the kind of wholesale denial of a negative
trend, and of its packaging and presentation as a positive development, as
we are seeing in the present".[5] Critical voices with global name recognition
like Arundhati Roy, Vandana Shiva and P. Sainath echo these concerns arguing
that the expansion and proliferation of commercial media in India has helped
create a public amnesia about the scale of poverty and injustice of inequality in the
country.

Despite the seeming news blackout on rural poverty, the spectacle and ulti-
mately scandal of inequality alongside rapid economic growth, has been a
recurring narrative across both public culture and policy debates in the last
decade. In news-stories, television, film and advertising—the parallel world of
the urban poor and the changing face of rural India are integral to con-
temporary narratives of a fractured globalization in Indian public culture.
In this chapter, I am less interested in the proliferation of the discourse on
crime and violence, which follow some of the trends identified in research
examining the tabloidization of journalism globally since the 1990s.[6] My con-
cern is on an equally dominant representational motif for urban and rural
inequality in neoliberal India that conspicuously precludes the possibility of
social antagonism or conflict. Instead, these draw on long-established Orien-
talist tropes providing exotic "authentic" backdrops for the staging of entre-
preneurial potential and untapped consumer demand—we need to only
consider the familiar images of smiling street-children, the enigmatic bullock
cart in the city, brightly clad peasants empowered with mobile phones and
laptops—as generic references to this discursive style. In terms of more critical
interrogations, while it is certainly true that the root causes of farmer suicides
in the face of economic liberalization of the agrarian sector leading to growing
indebtedness and insecurity are infrequently covered in the news as critics like
Sainath suggest, the issue has found traction in the national news media as
well as in documentaries and even popular Hindi film.[7] Similarly, the recent
scandal over the 2010 Commonwealth Games in New Delhi brought public
attention to the "callous and inhuman conditions" of work and housing for the
hundreds of thousands of migrant workers who built the infrastructure and
stadiums meant to showcase Brand India to the world.[8] Moreover, the media's
fleeting and most certainly flawed narrative of inequality is repeatedly mobi-
lized as it negotiates how to frame political claims for *inclusion* contesting
both economic and social disparities. These range from armed political insur-
gencies by economically marginalized communities (including historically
oppressed *adivasi* or tribal groups), social movement protests against forced
land acquisition and industrial development, and legislative reform and redress
around a range of issues including caste-based reservations and public works
programs.[9]

It is against this dynamic background that I am interested in assessing how
inequality in "emerging" India has been negotiated through the institutional
practice of nation branding as it has developed over the last decade. Advertis-
ing and marketing gurus have promoted national branding strategies as a nat-
ural expression of the inevitable convergence between corporate and state
interests in the promotion of economic growth in the post-industrial era.[10]
Experts like Wally Owens, Chairman of Saffron Brand Consultants with
accounts specializing in "place-based branding" have argued that modern
nations since 1789 have always branded and rebranded themselves, and that
"many of the techniques" of branding a company can be easily applied to

"motivate," "inspire" and "manipulate" citizens as easily as consumers.[11] The naturalization of this shift in institutional practice positions marketing experts as merely offering pragmatic assistance to governments in the era of globalization.[12] This rationalization neatly discounts the politicized transformations of the 1980s and 1990s where the object and actors that define state intervention changed fundamentally, evident in a new discourse of neoliberal governance. This meant, among other changes, a shift away from centralized state bodies focusing on domestic performance of the national economy to "partnerships" between private actors, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and state bodies coordinating the delivery of social goods and services. In other words, I want to highlight the fact that nation branding should be understood as one of the outcomes of the re-regulation of the state whereby transnational corporations are seen as legitimate participants in shaping social policy.[13] This vision of national development is contested in a deeply unequal postcolonial democracy like India, and the remainder of the chapter traces these shifts from the India Shining campaign in the first era of reforms to the "Inclusive Neoliberalism" strategies discussed in the second half of the paper.

Theoretically, my aim is to show that the significance of nation branding in the Global South cannot simply be understood in terms of consumer culture supplanting democratic citizenship or re-feudalizing the public sphere. Rather, in locating the current shifts in the discourse of nation branding in a longer history of the postcolonial state, my intention in this chapter is to critique the "easy diffusionist teleology" implicit in much of the media and globalization literature.[14] Political theorist Sudipta Kaviraj contends that the "logic of self-differentiation in modernity" requires new sets of questions about "differently democratic" contexts.[15] The point being that in India as in many contemporary postcolonial societies, the state is managing *both* the "compulsions of democracy" as it "enforces capitalist transformation."[16] In the following sections I hope to show the ways in which nation branding in such a fraught context can be seen as a strategy to manage the violence of "accumulation by dispossession," on the one hand, and, on the other, the "new economies of desire" based on the powerful aspirational promise of the market.[17]

Nation-branding and the limits of India Shining: 1984–2004

In 1984, Rajiv Gandhi, son of assassinated Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, became the nation's youngest Prime Minister promising a "new era of Indian politics" emphasizing technological modernization. Within a few years, the Rajiv Gandhi administration deregulated the computer software industry and created the first Software Technology Park in Bangalore—India's designated Silicon Valley—to facilitate software exports as a central component of the new liberalization strategy.[18] Almost simultaneously, the Department of Information Technology began its first efforts at branding India as a rising

"Software Superpower" promoting the export of IT services along with the Ministry of Commerce, from San Jose and Boston, to Europe and Japan. In 1988, this led to the formation of the powerful trade association representing the software industry based in India, NASSCOM.[19] As an industry association, NASSCOM's is seen as having been extremely successful in setting the standard for business lobbying within India in the 1990s, as trade associations in other sectors began to play a more coordinated and visible role in directly shaping macro-economic policy.[20] As an association member makes clear in an interview promoting NASSCOM's success as a model for emerging markets in Latin America:

> "NASSCOM's biggest achievement was to take a bunch of IT players and strongly position their case to the Indian government," says PV Kannan, CEO of 24/7 Customer. "They made sure the level of attention was there, and that the IT sector was taken seriously. In fact for the first half of its existence, NASSCOM was more focused on lobbying the Indian government than anyone else. It's only since 2000 that they're focusing on selling the destination to other countries."[21]

Thus industry insiders themselves point out the ways in which they had disproportionate success influencing policy decisions in this period. This includes "wresting [the] most concessions … from government," including implementing stronger intellectual property rights regimes, and favorable tax and labor and infrastructure policies,[22] all the while presenting themselves as vocal critics of state-led development. This initial branding of economic development resonated immediately across much of the media field. Since the first phase of economic reforms in the mid-1980s associated with India's young techno-savvy post-political Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, the Indian cultural industries began to recognize and celebrate the "spectacular success" of the domestic IT industry as having produced the beginnings of the arrival of modern India.[23] This process deepened throughout the 1990s, with both Congress and Hindunationalist BJP-led coalition governments in power, in consensus about the leading role of the IT sector as central to the remaking of development in a "global India."

Promoting the concept of Brand India from these early days meant reframing the terms of Indian capitalism, which proponents of this new technocratic development vision insisted had earlier served the interests of a small corrupt socialist elite. Initial branding efforts therefore served to repackage a new logic for a more globally integrated capitalism, as opposed to the state-led capitalism of the previous Nehruvian era. As observers have noted, as the era of economic liberalization business in India " … is no longer the privileged bastion of a few mercantile castes."[24] This presumed widening of the "social base" of a more diversified capitalist class especially in South India, the epicenter of

India's IT industry, has created a resonant market populism that is evident across policy and popular debates. In contrast to the "Brahmanic socialism" of the postcolonial state, the new transnational entrepreneurs especially in the symbolically important IT industry are positioned as confident advocates of a techno-populist mandate for middle class mobility.[25]

It is important to point out that this argument reverses the political power associated with the colonial era with India emerging as a major economic and military force on the global stage while simultaneously promising to liberate the consuming masses from the mistaken foray into state socialism. William Mazzarella has shown how advertising and marketing executives in India in the 1990s played a self-conscious role in serving as both "key spokesman for and direct beneficiaries of the new consumerist dispensation," and as cultural brokers legitimating the resurgence of confident, middle class, dynamic India in relation to the rest of the world.[26] This was certainly the message of the liberalizing forces within the ruling Congress Party between 1991 and 1997, which passed the most extensive set of economic reforms of privatization and deregulation of key industries, including the media and information technology industries.

Global Swadeshi[27]: The India Shining campaign

Although initially opposed to the Congress Party's policies of economic reforms in the 1980s and early 1990s on the grounds of cultural nationalism, by the mid-1990s, the right-wing Hindu nationalist BJP redefined their relationship to the image of a global India. In studied contrast to the developmentalist insistence on India's relative backwardness based on various standard indicators (GDP/capita, literacy rates, and especially poverty rates), the branding of modern India draws from a conservative remaking of a "new Swadeshi" politics in line with neoliberal reforms. The new "swadeshi" discourse embraced by the BJP combined Gandhian nationalism against colonial myths of Indian inferiority with an anti-statist discourse critiquing the history of postcolonial state-led development. As Mazzarella suggests, this meant that despite a contradictory relationship with global consumer culture, constructing Brand India in the 1990s focused on "claiming the long-overdue right to be *producers* rather than merely consumers of modernity."[28] By 2004, after having ruled a coalition national government in power, the BJP perfected its contradictory logic of global nationalism:

> In a short time, India has emerged as a leading power in Information Technology. In a short time, our manufacturing sector has restructured itself and become globally competitive. Individual Indians have always scripted success stories in India and overseas; now India as a whole is big news. Today, India stands tall in the international community. Its voice is heard and respected. Our people are finding fresh recognition and new audiences.

There is a rapidly widening belief, both in our own country and all over the world, that India is poised for a great leap forward. Ours is an ancient nation with a civilisation that is more than 5,000 years old. We have inherited a glorious cultural heritage, which the entire world marvels at. India has time and again shown unmatched resilience to overcome the vicissitudes of history, to emerge resurgent. The time of Indian Renaissance has arrived again. We have set the stage to reclaim our rightful inheritance as a Great Power contributing to humanity's all-round progress.[29]

A decade into the era of economic reforms and under the Hindu Nationalist BJP government, the India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF) was developed in 2002 as a public private partnership between the commerce ministry and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). Educating Indian citizens about the benefits of this new market society was therefore constitutive to the logic of creating Brand India institutionally. In 2003, when discussions about launching the IBEF began at the AdAsia conference, no other than Mukesh Ambani, famously one of the wealthiest individuals in the world and Chairman of India's largest company Reliance Industries, argued that 21st-century brand representatives would have to walk in the footsteps of the most famous Indian brand ambassadors, "Mahatma Gandhi and Mother Teresa." Ambani was not just implying that globally successful Indian capitalists were the new salvation for the poor, but reminding other captains of industry and burgeoning business media, that it was their mutual responsibility to create "a billion brand ambassadors."[30]

Mahatma Gandhi and Mother Teresa are not the icons that come to mind, however, when we look back at the failed efforts of the BJP-led coalition government's "India Shining" (Bharat Brand) campaign, referenced in the quote which began our discussion in this section. The architect of the campaign was media-savvy Pramod Mahajan, the first appointed Minister of Communication and Information Technology (IT) (2001–4), who had close, and critics would argue dubious, connections to Indian telecommunications giants (including Reliance) whose interests he actively promoted both domestically and globally.[31] This was the "technocratic" face of the Hindu Nationalist party in power, which had in power accelerated the economic reforms initiated by its Congress Party predecessors. Gearing up for a national election between December 2003 and January 2004, the BJP-led government launched a $140 million media blitz, the single most expensive public sector advertising campaign in national history, with a bombardment of colorful and slickly produced ads on billboards (hoardings), television and print media, celebrating the BJP's role in creating a "resurgent India."[32] The architects of the campaign emphasized the "feel good factor" of economic growth, symbolized by an imagined rural prosperity, but represented most effectively through images of call center workers, consumers in shopping malls and the promise of spatial

transformation as embodied in the postindustrial technology parks. As Political Scientist Srirupa Roy notes, "the normative subject" of India Shining was no longer the "humble peasant" or "hungry masses" of a bygone era of nationalist cultural practices associated with state socialism, but rather featured the ascendency of the new aspirational middle classes and the freedom and pleasure of consumer culture.[33] The ubiquitous slogan ultimately transcended the campaign itself and became part of the "wider public cultural domain," referenced in other ad campaigns and ultimately part of everyday political discourse.[34]

> "*Aam aadmi ko kya mila*?"[35] These five ordinary words did wonders for the Congress in 2004 elections. As the catchy slogan hit the airwaves, the political discourse changed in a matter of weeks, shifting focus from India Inc. to India Invisible. The *aam aadmi* foxed pollsters and pundits alike. On the day the voting machines were opened, the "India Shining" campaign was lying in a dustbin, with the BJP-led NDA biting the dust.[36]

The surprising "rise of the aam admi" (common man) as an unforeseen obstacle to the heady celebrations associated with a branding campaign that was designed to highlight the economic ascendency of a "new" India, was in fact news for media organizations like *The Times of India*.[37] As one of the leaders of market-driven journalism, the Times Group along with much of the elite English-language commercial media had played a pivotal role throughout the 1990s in actively promoting economic liberalization under both the Congress and BJP national governments.[38]

If the India Shining campaign captured the resurgence of a new market-oriented nationalism, it also simultaneously unleashed a political backlash in drawing focused attention to the skewed benefits of the new strategy of economic growth. As historian Ronald Inden states, the emphasis on the prosperity of the new middle classes alienated "the lower urban classes—the natural supporters of the BJP—and those in rural areas—the natural supporters of the left parties—to fend for themselves."[39] Responding quickly to this misfire in political communication, the opposition Congress Party—which had in the previous decade crafted the very terms of economic reform—mobilized an advertising campaign emphasizing the limits of Brand India's success as felt by "*aam admi*" (the common man).[40] The Congress Party's low budget campaign (estimated at about $6 million) featured black and white images and narratives of "ordinary Indians" targeting "rural poor voters," and was deemed far more effective in capturing the spirit of electoral democracy in 2004.[41]

The paradoxes of inclusive neoliberalism: Brand India 2004–12

Since the 2004 elections, " … the India Shining campaign has come to symbolize the deep discrepancy of new middle class perceptions of a prosperous and

booming economy and socioeconomic measures of unemployment and poverty in both rural and urban India."[42] These counter narratives from a broad range of critics resonate precisely because the rapid and "resilient" growth celebrated by the advocates of Brand India exacerbated and made tangible the material divisions between global and aspirational India.[43] While urbanization, literacy and access to media, technologies, consumer goods and credit have sped up dramatically in many parts of the country, both the rates and experiences of inequality and exclusion in terms of access to formal employment, housing and the absence of dignity in everyday life for the vast majority of Indian citizens, are observable and palpable realities, setting the grounds for contestation.[44]

In 2005, economist and current high-profile cabinet member in the Congress-led government, Jairam Ramesh, addressed a Brand India summit held by the Confederation of Indian Industry, to remind audience members of the mistakes of the India Shining campaign which had falsely tried to homogenize India's political economic realities. In this address, Ramesh quotes none other than passé guru of globalization Kenichi Ohmae, who as a consultant for McKinsey stated: "Forget about building Brand India. You guys can never build Brand India because you are associated with poverty, you are associated with filth." Ramesh pointed out the need to Brand cities, regions and industries associated with Indian modernity while also recognizing the "complexity" of India's unequal political economy where despite "sky-rocketing growth rates" there was a need to face the reality of the fact that "our disposable income is still about $500.00 per capita."[45] Improving India's image abroad thus remained a significant uphill battle. Despite the growing brand recognition of the nation's IT industry, a 2003 report for the government by a consulting company concluded that: "For most outsiders, India has an image of an exciting, but dirty and unsafe country."[46]

Against this backdrop, the public backlash to the India Shining campaign was seen as at least partially responsible for the BJP's surprising electoral loss to a new Congress-led coalition government (with initial backing from Left political parties). Nevertheless, the discourse of "resurgent" India, as embodied by the promise of new middle class consumer-citizens, remains central to the revised strategies of branding democracy and development today. As Leela Fernandes has argued in her work on the new middle classes, the failure of this vision in terms of popular electoral backlash should not be equated with its displacement from shaping policy outcomes through institutional access to "cultural and socio-spatial organizations" including commercial media organizations, at the level of civil society.[47] In this section, I try and show how the Congress-led coalition government under the leadership of economist and architect of India's economic reforms, Manmohan Singh, would embrace a new discourse of "inclusive economic growth," that maintained an over-arching commitment to liberalization. We will unpack how this rebranding effort is re-negotiated in both electoral democracy (seen increasingly by the new middle

classes as "dirty and corrupt") and in the realm of civil society, where corporate actors begin to take a leading role as "partners" in the project of development.

Slumdog versus Millionaire

It is instructive to begin this discussion by considering the global image of "Shining" India that branding experts had failed to manage, not just within the country but also internationally into 2000s. Pertinent to our discussion here is the box-office success and multiple Oscar win in 2008 film *Slumdog Millionaire* by Danny Boyle, which garnered mixed reviews and even protests in India for its depiction of poverty pornography reinforcing the dystopian narratives of the third world mega-city.[48] For advocates of India Inc., it is no doubt troubling that the "slumdog" as opposed to the millionaire becomes the dominant image of neoliberal India. This, after two decades of liberalization and the careful cultivation of a modern, high tech, middle class consumer safely tucked away in office parks, shopping malls and gated communities of urban India. While the story of the popular film celebrates adversity with the ultimate feel good ending of the slum-dweller *becoming* a millionaire, critics like P. Sainath and others were quick to chastise the Indian media's decade-long obsession with the nation's "billionaire club" as a marker of national economic standing on the global stage.[49]

To get a sense of the discursive parameters of the Brand India campaign following the backlash to India Shining, we can contrast the promotional videos produced by IBEF for foreign investors in relation to the campaign advertising by both the Congress and BJP in the last national elections in 2009. In its promotional campaign designed for the World Economic Forum in Davos in January 2009, IBEF presented a "nation messaging campaign" broadcast on the Bloomberg global feed "to convey a holistic message of a resilient India." "India Now," one of the shorter overview films captures the essence of this campaign with its emphasis on the already achieved rapid modernized urban middle class India and the promise of the potential of aspirational small town and rural India, delivered through familiar liberal democratic institutions ensuring a "stable and progressive business climate."[50] Branding India's fractured democracy has meant highlighting the institutional soundness, technical capabilities and unique culture of the Indian political system. Brand India describes the current election as the country "abuzz" with "feisty slogans and suave websites:" the perfect amalgamation of an age-old tradition with new-age technology.[51]

For the audience in Davos, the Branding of a resilient India in the face of the global financial crisis is marked by subtle changes from the India Shining campaign, discussed in more detail later. However, nation branding in terms of domestic audiences draws on a different set of narratives reflecting the contested nature of neoliberal economic reforms. At both national and

regional levels, governments closely associated with urban new middle class agenda as discussed in the previous section, lost power and were replaced by political parties promising an "inclusive" path to reform. At the national level, the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government headed by the Congress Party implemented a series of reforms meant to extend social equity and welfare under the Common Minimum Program. Specifically, since 2004, the centrist UPA national government having extended its economic liberalization mandate in place since 1991 has simultaneously passed historic legislation in the form of one of the world's largest public works program, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) as well as the Right to Information Act (RTI). It is beyond the scope of this chapter to delve into the contradictory politics of redistribution and accountability as played out by the implementation of these two historic acts,[52] but suffice it to say that a new discourse of "inclusive growth" is part and parcel of rebranding efforts across state and corporate actors.

If we look at the 2009 election, we see that the failed India Shining campaign that gave birth to Brand India was replaced by a populist reclaiming of the democratic "slumdog" India by both the party in power, the centrist Congress Party, and their main national political opponent, the Hindu-nationalist BJP.[53] The ruling Congress Party released its national advertising campaign by buying the rights to *Jai Ho*, the Oscar winning best song for *Slumdog Millionaire*. The Congress Party chose *Jai Ho* as part of its campaign to "drive home the message that its regime has been a 'saga of hope for the common man.'"[54] The Congress Party self-consciously countered Brand India (Shining) by updating its successful appeal to "*Aam aadmi*," in its Jai Ho campaign with the lyrics, "*Aam aadmi ke badte kadam; har kadam par bharat buland*," translating to "The common man marches ahead and every step he takes makes India stronger." The corresponding images for the televised ads show Nehru laying the foundation of modern India, Lal Bahadur Shastri celebrating the Indian farmer and soldier, Indira Gandhi responsible for the Green Revolution and Rajiv Gandhi preparing India for the 21st century.[55] The Hindu-nationalist BJP responded with its own clever "*Bhay Ho*" (Terrorism/Fear and Hunger) campaign with a grainy black and white documentary-style ad featuring two "authentic" child street performers singing about terrorism, hunger and the realities for *aam admi* in India today.[56]

As we can see from this encapsulated discussion, the contemporary politics of nation branding in India hinge to a large extent on the fate of the non-middle classes who constitute the majority of the nation's citizens. In the 1990s, advocates of liberalization argued that 250 million strong middle class consumers were the direct beneficiaries of the rebranding of national economic priorities. In 2009, this number has supposedly grown to 450 million middle class consumers, close to half the population, a figure that is contested to say the least by scholarly research on the issue.[57] Regardless of the most

overblown estimates measuring the murky concept of the middle class, advocates cannot and in fact do not deny that some half (and more likely closer to two-thirds) of India's citizens are yet to be "empowered" as consumers despite India's rapid growth rates in the last decade.

Meanwhile, the global image of India in the corporate field has changed in the last decade, thanks to the role played by cultural brokers like official Brand India ambassador, Infosys CEO Nandan Nilekani and unofficial high-tech India enthusiast Thomas Friedman, among others.[58] These corporate brand ambassadors have been able to turn transnational public attention to rapid growth rates and the potential of India's consuming classes to promote investment opportunities, they have sung the praises of the potential benefits of outsourcing (which includes the women's liberation and curbing Islamic fundamentalism), and they have successfully branded cities and regions as attractive global investment and tourist destinations. These persistently powerful narratives of economic resurgence and technological modernity are precisely the lasting legacy of the India Shining vision, especially as played out in the dominant commercial media sphere.

Elsewhere, I have argued that we can see a corresponding "executive effect" in terms of economic coverage in terms of general infotainment as well as the newly specialized business media, literally aimed at "executives and decision makers."[59] India in the 1990s saw a proliferation of print-based niche-market business news media emerge—at least four national daily English-language economic newspapers as well as regional and national supplements on business news in virtually all major newspapers (all with online editions), and dozens of national business news magazines. The volume of relatively cheap "content" produced for this print genre has made the transition to television journalism a natural step, and business news and infotainment began to fill programming schedules from the late-1990s. Since 2005, India has seen an explosion of televised news programming, including business news in both English and regional languages equivalent to the sudden arrival of "50 CNNs."[60] In this crowded arena, formal and informal strategies associated with nation branding can be seen as playing a promotional as well as a pedagogic role educating a postcolonial citizenry that has long been skeptical about the benefits of "free trade." More pronounced than in long-established market societies whether the U.S. or Europe, my assumption is that the business news fields in "emerging" markets feature distinct pedagogic narratives of market-led modernization.[61]

Equating corporate performance with national interest is a common feature of the promotional culture of business television worldwide. For example, in 2006, the business media gave extensive coverage to the report titled "India Inc. Goes Abroad" which charted overseas acquisitions by Indian firms in the IT, biotech and other modern industries. The "global presence" of Indian companies was seen as proof of India moving up in global ranking, not just a site of investment for high-skilled low-wage labor.[62] More potent than the

coverage the business media provides to specific industries, is its persistent promotion of stories of individual success, accomplishment and successful entrepreneurial worldviews. In the last decade, there has been a growing trend in increasing regional and national coverage of India's billionaires, four of whom make up the top 10 wealthiest people on the planet. Mapping the rising fortunes of India's billionaires and their consumption habits, preferences and excesses has also become an informal common practice of nation brand extension, faithfully highlighted and referenced in the official IBEF publicity materials. The growing ratio of Indian billionaires globally and their combined net worth—"third largest, only behind that of the richest citizens of the U.S. and Russia"[63]—is discussed in the business media with the same passion as the Indian national cricket scores.

Inclusive neoliberalism

If the initial advocates promoting nation branding were somewhat tone-deaf to the realities of poverty and inequality in democratic India, what we now see is that the advantages of neoliberal reform of both economic and social policies are increasingly promoted as means of solving the "problem of development." For countries like India with histories of state-led development and in its case the legacy of the "bureaucracy raj," nation branding needs to establish a clear rupture from the previous era of state intervention. Nation branding therefore has to be seen in relation to the growing symbolic power of the broader notion of governance, or specifically good governance. The re-branding of a "new" India is premised around the recuperation of the individual citizen/consumer through the strengthening of non-state actors or civil society, which might include Non-Governmental Organizations as well as corporations including the media. As Charles Hale has argued in the context of Latin America, neo-liberalism is based on a critique of state intervention (the welfare state, devel-opmentalist state, etc.) and "is predicated on the need to recreate or recapture the individualist essence, in danger of being lost."[64] The current stage of "inclusive" liberalization therefore focuses on the citizen-subjects thus far left out of the benefits of global India. Importantly, in contrast to the redistributive mandate of a right to work public works program like NREGA, the new cor-porate experts emphasize "pro-market/pro-poor" solutions as the only reason-able means of poverty alleviation. A focus on neoliberal reform and "inclusive growth" then means the state "unload[ing] onto its neoliberal citizen-subjects the responsibility to resolve the problems—whether daily or epochal—in which they are immersed."[65]

In many ways, C. K. Prahlad's 2004 best-selling *Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid: Eradicating Poverty Through Profits*, most effectively captures these shifts. A well-known professor of Management at the University of Michigan, active in both policy circles from the World Bank to the World Economic Forum, Prahlad argued that: "By stimulating commerce and

development at the bottom of the economic pyramid, MNCs could radically improve the lives of billions of people and help bring into being a more stable, less dangerous world."[66] Technology is central to this equation in creating both potential entrepreneurs (farmers with computer access selling to a global market), but also in fueling the aspirations of potential consumers in rural India, which accounts for much of the empirical evidence for his larger argument. We can see these ideas reproduced in the Brand India campaign, when for example Kamal Nath, the Minister of Commerce and Industry in 2008, emphasized "the rise of India's aspiring middle class"—"a group that lives well above the poverty line, but hasn't yet attained true membership in modern consumer society." According to the official Brand India press release in Davos, which was repeated unedited in much of the English language Indian business media in 2008, the Minister argued that it was the realization of the aspirational goals of this multitude that was India's "secret weapon" in combating the global financial crisis.[67] Following this up, in the 2009 Branding campaigns picked up repeatedly by both the Indian and transnational business media, was a new report by the consulting group McKinsey which claimed that the "secret weapon" of continued economic growth in India and by extension the word, is "The Silent Revolution" in rural India.[68]

The re-formulated Brand India strategy therefore markets the aggregate individual accomplishments of Indian citizens at one level, but also opens up a new space to reconstitute the role of corporations in legitimately intervening as a "partner" in solving the problem of development. One of the seemingly radical gestures that emerges in these interventions, is their recurring emphasis on reversing an existing failed system of paternalistic state-led development past and promoting instead the notion of "corporate citizenship." Corporations are in this way vested with the rights of citizenship against the powerful hand of the state. Nation branding is thus constitutive of the good governance project of neoliberal reform, partially defined by the active promotion of civil society. Civil society organizations including corporate foundations promote a set of individual rights which promise to hold state organizations accountable, enforce property rights and provide incentives for individuals to engage in the right to participate in the market. This process of "NGO-ization" of the political landscape across much of the global South has been embraced by donors, the World Bank, USAID, and the pertinent to this paper, proponents of nation branding, and tends to purposely conflate social movement criticisms of the violence of the heavy-handedness of the state with neo-liberal economic orthodoxy.[69]

Perhaps the most prominent Brand India ambassador today, former *Infosys* CEO Nandan Nilekani, makes the case against state intervention and for civil society in his best-selling book *Imagining India: Ideas for a New Century*. Nilekani in his media blitz across the U.S. and India, has said that the idea to write his highly publicized book came from having to explain the

contradictions of Brand India, in places like the World Economic Forum or on behalf of IBEF. Promotional material for his book state:

> He discusses despite good intentions and astonishing idealism, our early socialist policies stifled growth and weakened our democracy; how, contrary to received wisdom, India's large and overwhelmingly young population has now become our greatest strength; how information technology is revolutionizing not just business but also governance in the everyday life of a vast majority of Indians; and how rapid urbanization is transforming both our society and our politics.[70]

Nilekani's proposition that India can only "reap the demographic dividend" of its large young population by extending the opportunities for education, health, roads, electric power and entrepreneurship, to the majority seems innocuous enough.[71] However, his vision of democracy firmly precludes the distributive role of the state, and instead celebrates the autonomous sphere of civil society—the flowering of technically sophisticated civil society organizations working on behalf of majority of Indian citizens holding state institutions accountable—as the only means for the majority of Indians to meet the aspirational goals of modernity. Nation branding in the global South consequently attempts to smooth over antagonisms in societies with histories of vibrant social movements often at odds with both powerful state actors and elite private interests. For IBEF, and its corporate "ambassadors" this means actively promoting "pro-poor, pro-market" development solutions and "win-win" interventions like micro-financing and self-help groups. As one article from the IBEF website recently noted, "After billionaires and household names like Ambanis and Mittals, it is the turn of little-known microfinance institutions from India to hit the pages of famed magazine *Forbes*, which has named seven such entities in the list of the world's top 50—highest for a country."[72] This is the "human face" of Brand India, resolutely insisting on the non-antagonistic relationship between capital and India's often-unruly citizens.

Provincializing communication theory: Lessons from India Inc.

The inequalities and possibilities of the media, state, citizenship matrix within established or new democratic polities, whether India or Egypt, cannot be theorized by "looking back" at the emergence of the industrial revolution or the print press in Europe or the U.S.[73] Most significantly, as historian E. P. Thompson reminds us, "the initial success of the capitalist productive organization was due precisely to the general absence of democratic institutions."[74] In this sense, there is a pressing need to "provincialize" the experience of European history still at the forefront of communication theory.

The call for "Provincializing Europe" by historian Dipesh Chakrabarty, recognizes that the origins of modernity were European but that its subsequent expansion in non-European societies cannot be extrapolated from trends based on European history.

The early promotion of Brand India, celebrating the rapid growth associated with the globalized IT industry and the arrival of Indian entrepreneurial heroes of the 1990s, was largely tone deaf to the vast disparities between "shining" India and the growing inequality of everyday life for the vast majority of the nation's citizens. I have tried to show how counter narratives challenging the premise of neoliberal modernity have shaped the evolution of nation branding in the context of the postcolonial neoliberal state. By 2004, at both national and regional levels, governments closely associated with neo-liberal economic reform and IT-led development had lost political power and been replaced by political parties promising reform. At the national level, the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government headed by the Congress Party that came to power in 2004 implemented a series of reforms meant to extend social equity and welfare under the Common Minimum Program, while retaining an overall commitment to liberalization. As we saw in the second section of the paper, it was in this context that promoting India Inc. became intertwined with the marketing of corporate citizenship for the larger project of good governance. This is especially prominent in high-tech modernization schemes that promise to rapidly democratize the benefits of India's skewed information society, which remains a glaring example of the ways in which neoliberal reforms have violently displaced the basic needs of "aam aadmi."

Brand India in 2009 has had to justify neoliberal reforms and the promise of a democratic marketplace against the backdrop of both national opposition and protest the larger global financial crisis. In November 2010 the Niira Radia tapes scandal exposed the extent of complicity, if not collusion, between corporate giants and a compliant news media industry, with journalists "acting as couriers between corporations and politicians." The hundreds of hours of recordings published by *Open* and *Outlook Magazines*, revealed frank conversations between Radia, head of one of the most successful public relations companies in India whose accounts include, Mukesh Ambani's Reliance and Ratan Tata's Tata Group, and prominent journalists from elite news media organizations working in tandem to influence state policy favoring competing corporate interests. Public outcry following these revelations has energized opposition parties, led to resignations by implicated bureaucrats and politicians, and spurred ongoing public interest litigation of corporate culpability in the loss of some $30 billion in public revenues.[75] More recently, the Anna Hazare Anti-Corruption movement embraced by the 24-hour news media, became a driving force in national politics, with supporters claiming that this new social movement represented India's "Arab Spring."[76] While there is consensus on the need to "tackle corruption" through greater transparency of state

actors, there is little evidence that advocates of corporate citizenship have any appetite for regulatory intervention.

Strategies and practices like nation branding should be understood as overtly political attempts to legitimate the growing influence of corporate lobbying on the terms of national development. If India's comparative advantage is its stable functioning democracy based on the rule of law that ensures the rights of individual property, then it becomes crucial to ensure that in this democracy, the "slumdogs" do not by force of numbers opt for greater redistribution at the expense of the billionaires. Just as a reflection of neo-liberal shifts in governance, national states are learning from and behaving more like transnational corporations, transnational corporations and national corporate stars alike invest significant sums on public relations efforts to prove that they are in fact, good citizens. I have tried to argue in this section that a critical analysis of the politics of nation branding in India must also include assessing the seemingly populist discourse of corporate actors engaging in public acts of good citizenship, promoting a very specific vision of democracy, civil society and good governance. I have also tried to draw attention to the pedagogic role of the business media in modernizing the new subjects of development. In the transnational corporate field, there is virtual consensus in the era of the post-Washington consensus that the private sector must play an increasingly central role in redefining development. In a postcolonial democracy where redistribution remains a central feature of unresolved political struggles over land, resources and welfare, nation branding has to do more than sell the benefits of doing business in India to potential foreign investors and tourists. Its reach must also market a new vision of development and democracy to both national and transnational constituents.

Notes

1 From 2005 IBEF Brochure: India Fastest Growing Free Market Democracy. http://www.ibef.org/brandindia/indiabrochure.aspx.
2 Srirupa Roy, *Beyond Belief: India and the Politics of Postcolonial Nationalism*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 164.
3 See: http://www.scribd.com/doc/21404624/INDIA-Fastest-Growing-Free-Market-Democracy. For more on contested data in regard to poverty rates in India, see: http://www.im4change.org/articles.php?articleId=40&pgno=2.
4 Arjun Appadurai, "Spectral Housing and Urban Cleansing: Notes on Millennial Mumbai," *Public Culture* 12, no. 3 (2000): 627–52.
5 Utsa Patnaik, *The Republic of Hunger and Other Essays* (Chicago, London: Merlin Press Limited, 2008), 116.
6 Colin Sparks and John Tulloch, eds, *Tabloid Tales: Global Debates Over Media Standards* (Boulder, CO: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000).
7 In addition to several documentaries on the subject, *Peepli Live* was the Indian government's official entry for best foreign feature film category for the Academy Awards in 2010. It is a fictional account of farmer suicides, highlighting the urban-rural chasm as expressed by the role of the 24-hour news media coverage of the

spectacle of rural poverty. The film produced by a well-known Bollywood actor has had reasonable box-office success in India. See: http://articles.economictimes.india-times.com/2010-08-16/news/27605165_1_peepli-live-production-s-peepli-omkar-das-manikpuri.

8 http://www.ndtv.com/article/india/42-workers-paid-with-life-for-commonwealth-games-42327.

9 It is beyond the scope of this paper to elaborate on these wide-ranging claims for political and economic inclusion. I am referencing armed insurgency by Maoist rebels across some of India's economically most marginalized regions with historically large *adivasi* (tribal) populations, largely in the national media the frame of "security threat." See for instance, Nandini Sundar, "The Horror State of Chattisgargh," *Countercurrents*, January 11, 2010: http://www.countercurrents.org/sundar110110.htm.

   I would also include social movements, both organized and spontaneous, in response to neoliberal economic reform—ranging from opposition to Special Economic Zones and the privatization of land to demands for access to education and jobs based on caste. In terms of legislative redress, the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government headed by the Congress Party that came to power in 2004 implemented a series of reforms meant to extend social equity and welfare under the Common Minimum Program, while retaining an overall commitment to liberalization. Specifically, since 2004, the centrist UPA has passed historic legislation in the form of what is recognized as the world's largest public works through the *National Rural Employment Guarantee Act* (NREGA).

10 Melissa Aronczyk, "Living the Brand: Nationality, Globality and Identity Strategies of Nation Branding Consultants," *International Journal of Communication* 2 (2008): 41–65.

11 Wally Olins, "Branding the Nation: The Historical Context," *Journal of Brand Management* 9, no. 4/5 (2002): 241–48.

12 Aronczyk, "Living the Brand: Nationality, Globality and Identity Strategies of Nation Branding Consultants," 245.

13 Paula Chakravartty and Katharine Sarikakis, *Media Policy and Globalization* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 35–39.

14 Sudipta Kaviraj, "Outline of a Revisionist Theory of Modernity," in *Indian Political Thought: A Reader*, eds Aakash Singh and Silika Mohapatra (New York: Routledge, 2010), 187–99.

15 Kaviraj, "Outline of a Revisionist Theory of Modernity," 188–89.

16 Ibid.

17 Partha Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in the Rest of the World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006); Nivedita Menon and Aditya Nigam, *Power and Contestation: India since 1989 (Global History of the Present)* (New Delhi: Zed Press, 2008).

18 Paula Chakravartty, "Governance Without Politics: Civil Society, Development and the Postcolonial State," *International Journal of Communication* 1 (2007): 1–22.

19 On its website the organization which claims to represent 95 percent of the IT-BPO industry claims to account for $60 billion in revenue and employ 2.5 million workers: "NASSCOM® is the premier trade body and the chamber of commerce of the IT-BPO industries in India." http://www.nasscom.in/Nasscom/templates/Normal Page.aspx?id=5365.

20 Aseema Sinha, "Understanding the Rise and Transformation of Business Collective Action in India," *Business and Politics* 7, no. 2: 1–37.

21 Tarun George, "Duplicating NASSCOM's Wild Success: Can it be Done in Latin America?" May 5, 2010: http://nearshoreamericas.com/duplicating-nasscoms-wild-success-can-it-be-done-in-latin-america/.

22 Suma Athreye and Sachin Chaturvedi, "Industry Associations and Technology-Based Growth in India," *European Journal of Development Research, 2007*: http://www.ilo.int/public/english/bureau/inst/papers/confrnce/research/sumapaper.pdf.

23 Paula Chakravartty, "Telecommunications, Development and the State: A Post-Colonial Critique," *Media, Culture and Society* 26, no. 2 (2004): 227–49.

24 Harish Damodaran, *India's New Capitalists: Caste, Business and Industry in a Modern Nation* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2009), 312.

25 Paula Chakravartty, "Flexible Citizens and the Internet: The Global Politics of Local High-Tech Development in India," *Emergences: Journal for the Study of Media and Composite Cultures* 11, no. 1 (2001): 69–88; Carol Upadhya, "A New Transnational Capitalist Class? Capital Flows, Business Networks and Entrepreneurs in the Indian Software Industry," *Economic and Political Weekly*, November 27, 2004: 5141–51.

26 William Mazzarella, *Shoveling Smoke: Advertising and Globalization in Contemporary India* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 283.

27 *Swadeshi* is the term used to reference the Gandhian nationalist movement emphasizing self-reliance in the face of British colonial rule.

28 William Mazzarella, *Shoveling Smoke: Advertising and Globalization in Contemporary India*, 207 (Italics in text).

29 BJP party website "Vision Statement" (2004): http://www.bjp.org/content/view/448/425/.

30 http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/catalyst/2003/11/20/stories/2003112000130100.htm.

31 Ronald Inden, "A Campaign that Lost Sheen," *The Hindu Magazine*, 2004: http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/mag/2004/10/03/stories/2004100300160200.htm.

32 The ubiquity of this campaign in terms of television time alone, meant that the 60 second ads aired some 9,472 times in the two-month period on both private and Doordarshan (state owned television network) channels. See B. Chandran "India Shining Amongst Biggest Ad Campaigns" in *rediff.com*, February 24, 2004: http://www.rediff.com//mmoney/2004/feb/24shining1.htm.

33 Srirupa Roy, *Beyond Belief: India and the Politics of Postcolonial Nationalism*, 163–65.

34 Srirupa Roy, *Beyond Belief: India and the Politics of Postcolonial Nationalism*, 163–65; Ronald Inden, "A Campaign that Lost Sheen."

35 Hindi for "How did the common man benefit?".

36 Shobana Saxena, "The Rise of Aam Admi," *Times of India*, December 27, 2009: http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2009-12-27/special-report/28075783_1_aam-aadmi-common-man-crore-households.

37 Sahana Udupa and Paula Chakravartty, "Changing with the Times of India (Bangalore): Remaking a Post-Political Field," *South Asian History and Culture*, 3(4): 1–20.

38 Arvind Rajagopal, *Politics After Television: Hindu Nationalism and the Reshaping of the Indian Public* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Pradip Thomas, *Political Economy of Communications in India* (New Delhi: Sage, 2010).

39 Ronald Inden, "A Campaign that Lost Sheen."

40 Inden interestingly points out that the Congress Party campaign featured black and white ads (harking back to an earlier era of nationalist imagery) where the Romanized Hindi phrase *Aam aadmi ko kya mila*? (How did the common man benefit) is featured in an English ad.

41 In this case, the Congress Party used a locally owned advertising company, Orchard, a Leo Burnett subsidiary, to produce its ad campaign directly in response to those produced with the much higher budget Indian Shining campaign by Gray Global Indian Division.

42 Leela Fernandez, *India's New Middle Classes: Democratic Politics in the Era of Economic Reforms* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 190.

43 Although it is beyond the scope of this chapter, it should be noted that the dystopic counter-narrative of neoliberal India, while certainly generally more accurate when it comes to documenting the lives of the most marginalized citizens of India, often fails to account for the grey zones of growing aspiration and at least spatial mobility that no longer separate impoverished rural India from globalized urban India. In other words, as more nuanced and ethnographic studies of contemporary India demonstrate, the stakes of political transformation are being fought out along lines that lie between the worlds of billionaires and impoverished peasants, including around what it means to be part of the contested "middle class" in India. For more on this line of argument see Amita Baviskar and Raka Ray, eds, *We're Middle Class: The Cultural Politics of Dominance* (New York: Routledge, forthcoming).

44 Solomon Benjamin, et al., "Fractured Terrain, Spaces Left Over or Contested: A Closer Look at the IT-dominated Territories in South and East Bangalore," in *Inside Transforming Urban Asia: Processes, Policies and Public Actions*, ed. D. Mahadevia (New Delhi: Concept Publishing, 2008), 239–85.

45 Jairam Ramesh, "Defining Brand India" Kasturi & Sons Ltd (KSL), *Business Line*, February 24, 2005.

46 2003 Report by All India Management Group and the Boston Consulting Group: http://ibef.org/download/IndiaNewOpportunity.pdf.

47 Leela Fernandes, *India's New Middle Classes: Democratic Politics in the Era of Economic Reforms*, 193.

48 Urban studies scholar Ananya Roy provides a thoughtful analysis of how a genre of critiques of this film opens up the space to present slums as sites of "subaltern urbanism". See Ananya Roy, "Slumdog Cities: Rethinking Subaltern Urbansim," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 35, no. 2 (2011): 223–38.

49 The editorial "Slumdog verus Billionaire" by P. Sainath was first published in *The Hindu* on March 18, 2009, and was immediately posted and cited across dozens of progressive global sites, blogs and magazines: http://www.hindu.com/2009/03/18/stories/2009031855770800.htm.

50 The current Brand India campaign films are available at: http://www.ibef.org/brandindia/indiafilms.aspx.

51 For IBEF's coverage of the current election see: http://www.ibef.org/general elections.aspx.

52 For a concise overview of the challenges of implementing the Rural Employment Guarantee Act, see the following editorial by Mihir Shah (Member of the Planning Commission): http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/thscrip/print.pl?file=2009081460860800.htm&date=2009/08/14/&prd=th&.

53 Political advertising expenditures were expected to increase by 25–30 per cent in this campaign, designed mostly to promote the populist appeal of political parties on the right and center. Discussions in the news media about growing ad spend to promote often false accounts of poverty alleviation often pointed out what the money spent on advertising could have paid for in terms of goods and services for the poor. See for example: http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/News/News_By_Industry/Services/Advertising/Political_advertising_budget_to_increase_by_25–30/articleshow/3515485.cms.

54 The Congress Party bought the rights to the AR Rahman global hit song for $200,000 in March 2009. To see the main 60-second television campaign spot see: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gOlcGruEZ44.

55 The other two 60-second films use the "Jai Ho" tune to weave together the achievements of the Congress in the past five years; showcasing, among other

things, India's Moon mission, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, the India-U.S. nuclear deal and Bharat Nirman. For more see: http://www.hindu.com/2009/03/14/stories/2009031454421000.htm.

56 To see the Bhay Ho political ad aired nationally see: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D0yL7Dv_keo The first few lines say: "Bam fatein, goli chale, atanki gadar machayen, grihmantri har ghante mein suit badal kar aayen" (Bombs explode, bullets are fired, terrorists create mayhem and the home minister is changing suits every hour). This is a reference to the Congress government's home minister resigning after the Mumbai terrorist attacks in November. http://newshopper.sulekha.com/india-general-elections-2009/news/bjp-counters-congress-jai-ho-campaign-with-satirical-poems.htm.

57 Leela Fernandes, *India's New Middle Classes: Democratic Politics in the Era of Economic Reforms*.

58 Nandan Nilekani was supposedly the inspiration for the title of *New York Times* columnist's Thomas Friedman's best-selling book *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty First Century*.

59 Paula Chakravartty and Dan Schiller, "Neoliberal Newspeak and Digital Capitalism in Crisis," *International Journal of Communication* 4 (2010): 670–92.

60 Nalin Mehta, "India Talking: Politics, Democracy and News Television," in *Television in India: Satellites, Politics and Cultural Change,* ed. Nalin Mehta (London: Routledge, 2008), 32–61.

61 In a sense this is a revamping of the kind of pedagogic strategies deployed by the paternalistic state-operated media in many parts of Asia, Africa and the Middle East. See: Lila Abu Lughod, *Dramas of Nationhood: The Politics of Television in Egypt* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

62 Ajay Khanna, "India Inc. Is on a Global Shopping Spree," *Financial Express*, 2006: http://www.ibef.org/artdisplay.aspx?cat_id=561&art_id=12947.

63 http://www.ibef.org/Archives/ViewArticles.aspx?art_id=18130&cat_id=483.

64 Charles Hale, "Does Multiculturalism Menace: Governance, Cultural Rights and the Politics of Identity in Guatemala," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 34 (2002): 485–524.

65 Ibid., 496.

66 C. K. Prahalad, *Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid: Eradicating Poverty Through Profits* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2005), 49.

67 http://commerce.nic.in/PressRelease/pressrelease_detail.asp?id=2375.

68 The Indian growth story is now spreading itself to India's hinterlands. Rural India, home to about two-thirds of the country's 1,145 million population, is witnessing an increase not just in its income but also in consumption and production: http://ibef.org/artdisplay.aspx?art_id=22111&cat_id=114&page=1.

69 Paula Chakravartty, "Governance Without Politics: Civil Society, Development and the Postcolonial State," *International Journal of Communication* 1 (2007): 1–22.

70 http://imaginingindia.com/explore-and-discuss-the-book/overview/.

71 Nandan Nilekani, *Imagining India: Ideas for a New Century* (London, New York: Penguin, 2008).

72 http://www.ibef.org/artdisplay.aspx?cat_id=60&art_id=17479.

73 Paula Chakravartty and Yeuzhi Zhao, *Global Communications: Toward a Transcultural Politcial Economy* (Boulder, CO: Rowman & Littlefield: 2008); Paula Chakravartty, "Telecom, National Development and the Postcolonial State," *Media, Culture and Society* 26, no. 2 (2004): 227–49.

74 Kaviraj, "Outline of a Revisionist Theory of Modernity," 188–89. Kaviraj argues that E. P. Thompson and others showed a "contradictory" as opposed to "functional" relationship between the development of capitalism and democracy:

Once capitalist industry was entrenched and had reshaped the structure of the whole European economy into a general bourgeois form, working class political movements gradually drew democratic rights as concessions from the entrepreneurial classes and political elites. To characterize democracy as a necessary functional concomitant of the capitalist economy is an astonishingly rationalizing and indolent way of viewing historic upheavals like the Chartist movement. It produces an ideologically rationalizing picture of capitalism as producing inevitable democratic political effects, showing it in a better light than it deserves historically.

75 P. Guha Thakurta, A. Kaushal, "Underbelly of the Great Indian Telecom Revolution," *Economic and Political Weekly* XLV, no. 49 (2010): 49–55.

76 For more on the unfolding Ana Hazare movement see discussions at http://kafila. org. A good overview of the issues at stake is an article by Nivedita Menon and Aditya Nigam: http://kafila.org/2011/08/22/if-only-there-were-no-people-democracy-would-be-fine/

Old nations, new brands

Marketing intimacy in the new Europe[1]

Anikó Imre

Introduction: Brand Europe and postnational citizenship

On the broadest scale, I want to think through how branding practices have come to define places and communities and to re-channel place-based loyalties and national identities by the early 21st century. Clearly, branding has grown far beyond a corporate marketing strategy to sell products to consumers. It is now a dominant cultural form and a modality of economic power. Celia Lury calls branding the *logos* of the economy. The more immediate layer of this pun encompasses the signs or slogans that establish brands, similar to the way Naomi Klein uses the term in the title of her bestseller *No Logo*.[2] For Lury, however, the *logos* of branding also expresses the underlying rationality that organizes the global neoliberal economy.[3] Drawing on Georg Simmel's work, she explains that brands signal the reintroduction of quality into the operations of capital. These operations have been traditionally measured in terms of the accumulation of quantity, typically in terms of money. However, in contemporary culture, the extensiveness of capital as quantity, or what Simmel calls the "merciless objectivity of money," is realized in terms of the *intensivity* of the relations between brands and consumers.[4] The brand functions not so much as a means than as a medium of communication, which allows for the controlled reappearance of quality in economic exchange.

The brand's introduction of qualitative intensivity into the conventional market economy of price unsettles the figure of the self-interested, calculating, rational individual at the core of dominant economic perspectives. Brands have transformed into "lovemarks," in Saatchi and Saatchi marketing CEO Kevin Roberts's phrase, which has become a brand in itself.[5] They are almost spiritual entities, which create affective semiotic environments around lifestyles and habits and also inevitably extend into civic participation. The love of and loyalty to brands is not incompatible with consumers' critical attitudes towards the companies that own the brands or towards capitalism in general. The niche markets formed since the 1990s cater to the playful, ironic, savvy consumer with whom the hard sell or "big bang" marketing model does not resonate any more. Branding is often most effective when it minimizes

marketing altogether, a strategy the *New York Times* named "the marketing of no marketing."[6]

Branding can thus be thought of as a "post-marketing" practice. It is no longer simply a medium of private economic exchange but a ubiquitous social currency, which permeates the public realm as well. It is coordinated not just by corporations but also by voluntary organizations, NGOs (non-governmental organizations), nation-states and even multilateral supranational institutions such as the International Monetary Fund or the World Intellectual Property Organization.[7] International relations scholar Peter van Ham goes as far as proposing that the European Union needs to turn itself into a lovemark. "Branding Europe is less about knowing the EU than it is about loving it," he writes. The EU lovemark needs to generate loyalty beyond reason by combining Europe's hard power with the soft power that comes less from substance than from the mystery, sensuality and intimacy of the (life)style associated with Brand Europe. He claims that this shift from substance to style indicates a change in political paradigms from the modern world of geopolitics to the postmodern world of images.[8] Besides securing Europe's competitive advantage in the global economic and diplomatic network, a successful Euro-lovemark also offers a more positive and confident sense of belonging and identity to European citizens, supplanting chauvinistic nationalism and contributing to the pacification of Europe. "By creating an aspirational lifestyle, branding offers a kind of ersatz for ideologies and political programs that have lost their relevance."[9]

What Van Ham proposes here is a postnational citizenship grounded in branding, where the irrational and outdated sentiment of nationalism is transferred to a supranational institution and is actualized in the free play of enterprising, confident citizens. The European Union is a particularly relevant site to investigate the contemporary transfer of loyalty and affect from nation to corporate brand. This transfer of loyalty is also legitimized in the expansion of traditional citizenship rights and rituals beyond the nation-state. Julie Aveline evokes the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, which gave member states' national citizens EU citizenship. The Treaty of Amsterdam (1997) went a step further by establishing that the universal principles and rights of European democracy are, in fact, primary to national citizenship and identity.[10] Postnational patriotism is a form of brand loyalty in this scheme, where "branding is about the empowerment of the universal and atomized citizen-consumer via a networking form of communication (the creation of multiple, flexible and fragmented communities of belonging)."[11] The new postnational, branded European identity is not static but constantly updated, not nostalgic but playful, not exclusive but made of different, yet compatible, legal and moral loyalty levels. "The EU diagram … becomes a form of free association, a portal, where the European citizen would see its [sic] civic right and moral references take the form of wish lists, out of which could be drawn a networking of forums and communities of interests and belonging beyond the national frame."[12] Branding

practitioners and academic experts on branding almost invariably consider such a shift from "chauvinistic" nationalism to pacific postnational belonging as a fortuitous process, which calls on individual European member states to emulate the EU's own self-branding strategies and overcome their outdated, primordial nationalisms. Such recommendations typically work through metaphors of a freely chosen, flexible belonging best exemplified by the EU's slogan, "unity in diversity."

Notwithstanding the simplistic optimism with which such calls tend to be issued, there is a certain logic to the transfer of affect from the nation-state to branded entities. First of all, national "imagined communities"[13] have been sustained from the start through reiterative practices of banal nationalism formed around certain images, rituals and symbols.[14] Place branding practices only systematize and reinforce certain already circulating positive images and constructions about a nation. Melissa Aronczyk shows that nationalism and national identity in the United States have, in fact, been carefully constructed in communication practices from the start.[15] While this is in many ways an exceptional case, it also lays bare the ways in which nationalisms have been cultivated in Europe in the service of specific, elite group interests. This is disavowed in national narratives' compulsive insistence of deep-rooted histories and shared traditions, or what Homi Bhabha calls nationalism's pedagogical function. This pedagogical function is always in tension with and at the risk of exposure by the very performative function that compels and repetitively reinscribes primordial histories.[16]

Moreover, while nationalism is alive and well around the world, it is also considered an increasingly outdated sentiment given the porous economic and cultural boundaries of nation-states, whose territories never fully coincide with their actual nations. Citizen identities, in both the moral and legal senses, are being redefined outside the frame of the nation-state within a network of allegiances divided among the state, civil society, as well as supra, intra and multinational institutions, NGOs and corporations, which share the right to guarantee civic privileges and citizenship values.[17]

One must ask, however, if the flexible notion of citizenship as an open and progressive database of identity choices is equally accessible to all European nation-states and European citizens. In Aihwa Ong's critical articulation, flexible citizenship refers to strategies by which individuals and states gather power and capital; it is propelled by the very neoliberal cultural logic of capitalist accumulation, travel, and displacement that induces subjects to respond fluidly and opportunistically to changing political-economic conditions.[18] Such a critical view only appears in traces in the scholarship on place branding, and even then only to be quickly refuted in most cases. Nation branding is promoted by academic experts and practitioners as an optimizing and inevitable market force that guarantees democratization, wealth and world peace. Simon Anholt, the high guru of place branding, claims that nation branding is an ethically neutral tool, which countries must use proactively to defend

themselves against the trivializing tendency of international public opinion. It is vital for countries to ensure that public opinion is as "fair, accurate and positive" as it possibly can be, he advises.

> I have always held that the market-based view of the world, on which the theory of place branding is largely predicated, is an inherently peaceful and humanistic model for the relationships between nations. It is based on competition, consumer choice and consumer power; and these concepts are intimately linked to the freedom and power of the individual. For this reason, it seems far more likely to result in lasting world peace than a statecraft based on territory, economic power, ideologies, politics or religion.[19]

In the research on place branding, which largely follows in Anholt's footsteps, the replacement of belligerent, territorial nationalism with peaceful brand loyalty tends to be celebrated as the triumph of individualism, consumerism and free choice. Nations can be made over just like selves. A nation's brand profile, a marketable composite of already circulating images, places, traditions and products, can be molded into a coherent country brand through strategic marketing campaigns, which, if done right, can and should also mobilize nationalism as an emotional resource tied to a corporate brand.[20] The result is a cheery, postnational and postpolitical patriotism, a win-win for states, citizens and foreign investors.

   One of the geopolitical regions where nation-branding experts recently descended to turn such principles into practice is Central and Eastern Europe. Postsocialist nation-states, most of them newly accessed EU member states emerging from failed neoliberal shock therapy, have taken their cues from the EU to make themselves desirable through branding as sources of cheap and educated labor, low levels of corporate regulation and fascinating destinations to visit. However, branding postsocialist nations has been riddled with ambivalence. On the one hand, the region's small nations have long displayed strong nationalisms. They have sustained affective bonds that have – often violently – rallied citizens around national symbols, values and traditions. This ready-made symbolic unity should be conducive to public relations and marketing campaigns built around national character, products, places and resources. On the other hand, nationalism's power rests on the semi-religious insistence on the nation's "natural" origins, confirmed by blood or linguistic connections, no matter how recent, imagined and invented these origins might be. Nation-states newly formed after the traumatic dissolution of the Soviet Empire and Yugoslavia have recently demonstrated just how fast nations can be strategically forged by national elites. However, nationalism effaces the process of inventing its origins in order to naturalize national belonging, while the corporate process of nation branding foregrounds this process, threatening to expose how fragile such constructed origins are. Furthermore, postsocialist

nation branding is caught in a struggle between unrealistic national self-projections and the confused national identities of citizens; between the desire of these states to construct new national images of pluralist, Westward-looking democracies and the burden of their communist heritage along with their populations' skepticism towards their government's and Western European public relations' companies' joint efforts to "upgrade" the nation as a brand.

In the following, I analyze the plight of Romania as a revealing example of how the optimistic neoliberal rhetoric attempts – and ultimately fails – to reinvent a country plagued by a damning image. In this case, the image is crystallized by the continued and even reinvigorated Western fascination with two bloody figures: the late dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, a metaphorical bloodsucker, and Dracula, the monster of Transylvania, a Western projection that grew out of Irish author Bram Stoker's novel.[21] However, the renewed Western fascination with Romania as a repository of Cold War imagery is only one set of obstacles to creating a positive nation brand. The other one is the nation's own skeptical population, unwilling to subscribe to the celebratory representations promoted by state-led nation branding efforts often helped by Western European branding agencies and EU funds. Following the discussion of some of the Anglo-American media representations that have done the most damage to Brand Romania, I evaluate state-supported efforts to improve the country's image by creating an appealing tourism destination brand.

Global Boratland

A host of docu-fictional films and television representations have recently singled out Romania as the most authentic dark spot on the map of post-Cold War Europe. Perhaps the most influential of these is Sacha Baron Cohen's 2006 mockumentary *Borat*, whose "Kazakh" scenes were filmed in the Romanian Gypsy village of Glod. Kazakhstan, a post-Soviet republic, the ninth largest country in the world and its fifth largest oil exporter, engaged in a six-year diplomacy battle with MTV, and later Cohen himself, over the film's unfavorable portrayal of the fictional Borat's homeland. The government was understandably sensitive about the country brand they had carefully cultivated since the collapse of the USSR. The state's own construction of a modernizing, multicultural country, different from the other "stans," was tarnished by Borat, one of three regular characters Cohen originally assumed on his *Da Ali G Show* (Channel 4, 2000; HBO, 2003–4). However, the diplomacy war eventually mellowed into a reluctant acceptance of the Borat character when it turned out that the country was not known well enough for its image to be tarnished. In fact, Borat/Cohen put Kazakhstan on the map, even if in the unflattering light of an extreme parody. Since the film generated curiosity and boosted the tourist industry, the Kazakh state eventually ended up playing

along and even incorporated Borat as a publicity figure in the service of its own state-branding strategy.[22]

At the same time, the actual pseudo-documentary images of a cow in the living room, toothless men, muddy streets, incestuous families and rampant anti-Semitism confirmed Cold War stereotypes of a backward Eastern Europe and attached these to Romania for comic purposes. After the film's 2006 release, the noise of protest by misled and undercompensated local Romanian extras was drowned out by the film's own publicity campaign and critical reception, which revolved around the United States as the film's real target of mockery. The producers' blithe use of rural Romania also effaced the fact that the locals in the film were Gypsies, who themselves suffer violent discrimination from the government and the Romanian majority. After *Borat* became a runaway hit, Romanian and foreign television crews and journalists invaded Glod to investigate what had really happened. This "fool's crusade," as one journalist put it, angered the humiliated villagers.[23] Some Gypsies explained their participation in the film by pointing out that Americans had intimidated them with bodyguards and expensive cars. "We endured it because we are poor and badly needed the money," they claimed.[24] Most Romanians, however, ended up blaming the Roma for having tainted the country's image yet again.[25]

British journalist Simon Calder from *The Independent* was one of several journalists who traveled to Romania to discover Glod for themselves after *Borat*'s release. Notwithstanding his sensationalist account of the trip, which took him "[racing] down a steep-sided valley" past "roadside vendors selling strange-looking fungi," Calder suggested that the villagers of Glod were "sitting on a Glod mine and should capitalize on the film to draw people to a fascinating corner of the Balkans. Romania is scarred with skeletons of factories abandoned when the ludicrous charade of communist economics collapsed," he adds. "While nature reclaims the foolish excesses of state Marxism. … Glod needs a visitor center." He recommends:

> A Borat Bar and Grill would be a winner (local delicacies include bear and boar), as would tours of the village in a car hauled by livestock, as in the film. A Kazakh Hotel, done up as a bordello and featuring "the fourth-best prostitute in Kazakhstan" might be a tribute too far. But the memory of Vlad the Impaler, the 15th-century prince who dispatched his enemies so painfully, can legitimately be invoked to provide an extra dimension. This was his territory, and very beautiful it is, too. Tourists who are enticed here initially due to the film will discover a land where you can hike in splendid isolation for hours, go biking through virgin forest, or simply enjoy the tranquility of Boratland. Praise be to Glod.[26]

When some of the residents of Glod filed a lawsuit against 20th Century Fox claiming that they were duped into participating in what they thought was a

documentary about poverty, the story made some international news. What the news stories failed to mention, however, was that the villagers had been persuaded to sue by Edward Fagan, a controversial American reparations lawyer, "to teach Hollywood an expensive lesson."[27] Now disbarred from New York and New Jersey, Fagan's reputation is primarily linked to his law-suits against Swiss banks on behalf of Holocaust survivors. His "negotiation process" with the Gypsy villagers and their trip to London are at the center of another documentary, also filmed in Glod. Dutch filmmaker Mercedes Stalenhoef's *Carmen Meets Borat* tracks what happened in the village before and after Borat/Cohen's arrival. Initially told by Fagan that they were "the Gladiators" from Glod who will fight *Borat* and regain their dignity, some of the unwitting participants in *Borat* ended up being summarily dismissed at the 20th Century Fox reception desk in London. Dropped off by Fagan at the entrance of the building and not speaking a word in English, they found themselves yet again the objects of ridicule in front of the cameras. Ironically, the poor villagers could not even receive visas to fly to America, so their much anticipated trip and the fantasies about what they would do with the potential millions from the case dissolved in disaster. Their case was dismissed in 2008 by U.S. District Judge Loretta A. Preska for lack of specific enough facts indicating that the villagers were misled. Meanwhile, *Borat* has become a reference point for a number of docu-fictional television shows that looked for and found in Romania the same cluster of poverty, medieval mysticism, and the irreparable, imposing shadow of communist dictatorship.

The Romanian episode of the Travel Channel's popular travel-food series *No Reservations*, which aired on February 25, 2008, became notorious among fans as the "worst episode ever." While the host, Anthony Bourdain, is known for his disregard for political correctness, this particular episode is punctuated throughout by his satirical grumbles in both voice-over and on-screen dialo-gue. The show opens with his companion-sidekick, Russian Zamir, biting into a never-ending sausage, greeting locals as "comrades." Over the images of dark and foreboding mountains, Bourdain's voice-over introduces Romania "and its mythical region of Transylvania" as a "grey and distant place," which lies "deep in the heart of Eastern Europe." Standing in a Bucharest street, he adds, "There were some creepy communists here. I like that too, you know." His tasting tour includes two stops: one is Bucharest, where he and Zamir shake their heads at Ceausescu's megalomaniac constructions and listen, bemused, to a local witness's account of the revolutionary events that led to the dictator's demise. The other one is rural Transylvania, introduced by wolf howls on the soundtrack and images of fog swirling around foreboding mountains. Once Bourdain and Zamir arrive there, they shake their heads at local efforts to turn Dracula into a tourist theme and drive the Dacia, "Romania's national car," described as "a strangely unbalanced structure on tiny wheels." The Dacia breaks down as scheduled, which justifies bringing out the ultimate icon of the pre-modern, a horse-drawn carriage. This provides

appropriate transport to the final scene, a pig slaughter, performed by silent villagers in folk costumes as Zamir sinks into drunken incoherence under Bourdain's satirical eyes.

While Baron Cohen's parody at least partially targets uneducated Westerners who would believe gross Cold War stereotypes of Eastern Europe, Bourdain shows no sense of obligation to reflect on his own position of privilege and responsibility as the host of a globally syndicated television program reporting on Romania. As he repeatedly says, he is disgusted with local efforts to capitalize on Western fascination with Dracula and Ceausescu, which are, no doubt, at least partly staged for his own TV show, delivering the spectacle Americans want to see. He calls a theme restaurant in Bucharest an "insane museum of bric-à-brac," a "kitschy testament to imperialism." His only mission, he claims, is to find good local food, which, his casual theory goes, should logically result from "years of nonconsensual sex with invading armies." "My quest for authentic food and culture has led me to this?" he asks with disdain when Zamir takes him to the basement of the Transylvanian Dracula Hotel (near Bran Castle) on Halloween night, where a dress-up party is organized for tourists. Bourdain visibly suffers through the crowning of "Miss Transylvania" (a woman from Nevada), and the subsequent arm-wrestling championship, in which Zamir pretends to lose to an American woman. Bourdain's comment is, "That's why you lost the Cold War." This arrogant dismissal of the former Eastern Bloc as goofy, weak and feminized recasts the Cold War as an actual military event won by the United States, something commonly assumed in American news and political discourse. The remark also illuminates Zamir's real function in the episode. The only other participant with a speaking persona, Zamir, allegedly a guide and a "friend," is in fact a typical sidekick, harmless, jovial, round and accented, whose job is to set up and then eagerly laugh at his tall, well-coiffed American master's sardonic jokes on cue. His role requires that he play the buffoon when necessary, using his former communist status to "go native" and perform what Bourdain presents as the grotesque absurdity of postsocialist Romania.

As soon as the show was aired, Romanians also began to air their sense of betrayal and disappointment. Insulted fans, both in the country and living elsewhere in the world, filled online discussions with frustrated commentary on Bourdain's poor choices of places to visit and foods to try, the host's responsibility to provide a fair representation, and his choice of an ignorant and increasingly drunk Russian as a guide. The latter was seen by Romanians as an especially painful slap in the face: it ignored, or worse, cynically exploited, Cold War tensions with Russia, Romania's recent colonizer, and confirmed a monolithically gray view of the former Soviet Bloc where traditions, histories and languages are irrelevant. For many Romanian viewers, the two narrators in this story presented an allegory of two former Cold War superpowers, one now subordinated to the other, teaming up for some good fun for old time's sake to bully the real losers. While viewer comments abundantly pointed out

the similarity between *Borat*'s and Bourdain's portrayals, they correctly deemed the latter even more damaging as a show whose mission is, precisely, to entice interest in lesser-known places as destinations for tourists, consumers and investors.

The episode had the power to undermine Romania's self-branding as an attractive destination. Articles such as "The Star from the Travel Channel Crushed Us and We Paid the Bill" in the daily *Cotidianul* tracked the fiasco caused by the show, reminding readers of the fact that Romanian authorities actually paid Bourdain and his team $20,000 to promote Romania.[28] To understand the scale of the damage done by *No Reservations*, it is revealing that Bourdain's blog about Romania generated no fewer than 2096 impassioned comments, while the average response to an episode is around 100 postings. Profoundly insulted, many bloggers took Bourdain to task: "Of Romania's hour-long chance to prove to the world that we are NOT the gray and forgettable place, you wasted 20 minutes to show Nevada tourists embarrass themselves during a pretend Halloween party (not at all specific to our country)." An American who adopted a baby from Romania described the trauma that his son, now thirteen, suffered after watching the show. "The damage you did to him is immeasurable," he wrote. Bourdain's description of Romanian cuisine as "primitive" struck a particularly sensitive note with Romanians. "You are biased against Romania," one blogger reproached Bourdain, reminding him that in Asia he had no problem enjoying bugs, raw meat, and snake hearts.[29]

The outpouring of complaints provoked a response from Bourdain himself, posted on his blog, "Tony's Travel Journal," on February 26, 2008. In this brief response, entitled "Romania: What the Hell Happened?" Bourdain acknowledges that his "pal" Zamir may not have been the best choice to show him around Romania, but makes no apologies. "The fact is," he declares, "things WERE fucked up." Ultimately, he explains, he has no other obligation than to tell the truth as he sees it. "At the end of the day? That's what happened. That's what it felt like. Period. Frankly? I think it's a pretty funny show."[30]

Top Gear, BBC 2's most watched show, broadcast in over 100 countries, also took a recent episode to "Borat country," as the hosts called Romania. In November 2009, Jeremy Clarkson and his two regular companions, Richard Hammond and James May traveled there to seek out "the best road in the world." They drove an Aston Martin DBS Volante, a Ferrari California, and a Lamborghini Gallardo Spyder down the Transfăgărăşan Highway, a dramatic road built by Nicolae Ceausescu in the Carpathian Mountains. Their adventures included a stop in Bucharest's Revolutionary Square to marvel at Ceausescu's megalomaniac construction the House of the People, and one in a Gypsy village, where they were successfully stormed by curious Roma children, made fun of the Dacia, and got stuck on a narrow bridge in an unpaved, one-lane road. "Coming here in a car that cost £168,000 is a bit like turning up in the Sudan in a suit made entirely out of food," Clarkson joked.

The hosts did note at the beginning their surprise to find expensive cars in the parking lot of a five-star hotel in the seaside resort of Romania, which defied their expectations of Romania, a country "full of oxen and people throwing stones at Gypsies." However, this brief moment of hesitation was soon overcome by a stubborn resolve to confirm the worst stereotypes. Jeremy Clarkson, who has gained a reputation for his political incorrectness and allegedly earns around £1 million a year as a *Top Gear* host, stages *Top Gear Romania* as an open invitation to laugh at the eternally and hopelessly backward underdogs. While *No Reservations*' Anthony Bourdain at least claims to genuinely seek out "authenticity," Clarkson neither fakes an interest in learning about the Romanian culture nor is impressed with its natural resources. While Borat acts as a linguistically and ideologically challenged yokel ostensibly concerned with "cultural learnings" for "make benefit," Clarkson actively seeks to dismiss Romania, fashioning himself as a "postironic" Brit who indulges in scandalous, over-the-top racist remarks. Unabashedly boasting his skepticism about Romania's potential to be interesting, he acts as a passive anti-tourist who just happens to run into trouble by chance.

When they receive the producer's envelope with the "challenge" to find Ceausescu's highway, May, Clarkson and Hammond can't be bothered to read the word "Transfăgărăşan." As if Romanian were a joke language, they stutter and chuckle as they pass the note among each other. "Transf" … "Transf. … Transfffff … what?" As he is driving through Bucharest, May opens a Romanian phrase book and starts reading aloud for amusement: "Buna Seara" ("Good Evening"). "Let's buy a glass door and full double glazing." Slowing down, he addresses a boy walking in the street with: "Bunaaa searaaa. This time last year … I was in Scotland." At Casa Poporului (The People's Palace), a bemused Clarkson approaches a Romanian official waiting in his car: "These boxes are not the same size," he reads from his book in Romanian, laughing at the man's confused look. In another instance, May drives away exasperated when he cannot get English directions to the People's Palace from a man at a gas station. To confirm their view that Romania is part of an undifferentiated tribal region, the trio confuse Romanian with Russian and Hungarian. When a Romanian man apologizes for not having seen their Dacia, into which he "accidently" backed his truck, May "translates" his words of excuse with a sneering and dismissive tone: "I think he's saying, in Hungarian or whatever that is, that it's my fault for parking the car."[31]

Top Gear's "fictional" voyage in Romania is like a sequel to British Orient Express narratives of the 1930s, strongly evocative of novels such as Ethel Lina White's *The Wheel Spins* (1936) on which *The Lady Vanishes* was based. First introduced in 1883, the Orient Express train was advertised in the 1920s as "the Magic Carpet of the East" and finally entered English literature in the 1930s, after the initial excitement associated with it slowly faded. Vesna Goldsworthy tracks a series of novels, including Graham Greene's *Stamboul Train* (1931), which established the conventions of the Orient Express story.

The plot of these novels usually relies on unexpected snowstorms and sub-sequent delays, the Balkans becoming a sort of a "Bermuda Triangle" on a train's route.[32] In keeping with this view, *Top Gear* presents Romania as a territory off the map, where strange things may happen. The hosts inform us in voiceover that as they travelled further east, "the high-tech, modern Romania we knew, ran out." May "gets lost" because his Lamborghini's GPS simply does not have the "points of interest" feature for Bucharest, Romania's capital. "The Italians don't acknowledge the existence of Romania!" he exclaims with a tone of bemused satisfaction.

Faced with a herd of cows blocking the road, the *Top Gear* team manages to get "really lost" when a "random" right turn brings them into a Gypsy vil-lage. The encounter with the poor villagers makes room for another set of dismissive jokes, which are meant to confirm that Borat's country is actually real. "It is Gypsy country around here … I am told that they can be quite violent if they don't like the looks of you," Clarkson warns us. Once in the village, the *Top Gear* team dutifully reenacts Borat's narrative. Stuck in the narrow streets of the Gypsy village, they register a place where humans and animals cohabitate, as poorly dressed children gather around the expensive cars while running past chickens, turkeys and pigs. Recalling, once again, Miss Froy from *The Lady Vanishes* who can only write her name on the train's window because it is soiled and greasy, the Roma children write their names on the cars' thick layer of accumulated dust while Clarkson rolls his eyes.

The episode received mixed reactions in Romania. "Shocked and disappointed," the Romanian ambassador in London sent the BBC producers a request to remove the offensive remarks that linked his country with *Borat*. Some view-ers, however, chose to overlook the show's condescending tone and speculated that the hype around Transfăgărăşan may turn out to be "the best advert for Romania seen on U.K. television at any time over the past 20 years."[33] This is exactly how Costin Giurgea, a young man who assisted the British team and the editor in chief for *Top Gear Romania*, defended the show. On his blog hosted by the magazine, he argued that rather than damaging Romania's reputation, *Top Gear*'s episode was "the equivalent of country branding of massive proportions," or "the best thing that happened to Romanians since the Romans left Dacia."[34] In response to angry Romanians' comments about their sense of betrayal and humiliation, Giurgea blamed such viewers for failing to handle Clarkson's jokes. After all, he adds, as the saying goes, "there is no such thing as bad publicity."

One of the most stunningly blatant proofs that Romania is fair game to represent the uncivilized and the premodern are two commercials that first aired on December 8, 2008 on major U.S. networks. In the first one, a wintry Victorian tableau of a poor village dwelling hidden among dark mountains, identified in an intertitle as "Romania," comes to life when an American Aid worker receives a package containing a precious jar of Folgers coffee. The

locals gather around him, staring in amazement as he prepares his coffee in a makeshift cheesecloth coffee filter, anticipating their lives to be brightened by Folgers.[35] In the other ad, "Romanian" villagers, dressed in folk costumes, taste-test Burger King whoppers "for the first time." As Liviu Tamas, the mayor of Budesti, where the ad was filmed, explains, although he had refused to give the producers permission for their "experiment," they ignored him and proceeded to do a "casting" call for a "documentary" at a local restaurant, where they paid willing participants about $40 "just for tasting some food."[36]

The portrayal of Romania as a forgotten land full of "Whopper virgins" is so blatant in this ad that it even inspired a *Saturday Night Live* spoof on January 10, 2009. However, *SNL*'s "the making of the ad" skit, based on the Whopper Virgins campaign's own online docu-mercial teasers, turned out to be yet another parody of local Romanians rather than of Burger King's ethnocentric ad campaign, in which people in remote locations are subjected to the taste of civilization by being paid to try and compare a Whopper and a Big Mac. In the *SNL* skit, host Neil Patrick Harris acts as a Burger King spokesperson to introduce the Romanian taste test. The three villagers who participate are so backward that one is unable to hold a cheeseburger properly, another tries to run off with it "to feed his village for a whole month," and the third one puts it on his head while laughing maniacally.[37]

These examples illustrate the powerful external political and media investment in freezing the legacy of Ceausescu's mad communist reign, wrapped in a medieval layer of vampiric mysticism, as the core of Romania's identity. The next section explains how the Romanian state has attempted, and why it has failed so far, to withstand this pressure and reinvent itself in the aftermath of the Cold War by drawing on historical discourses and national images that bypass the damning Draculescu legacy. While a nation brand is a composite of many different economic, political and cultural discourses, here I limit my focus on the agonizing efforts coordinated by the Romanian state to upgrade the country's tourism brand in the face of an avalanche of Western docu-fictional representations.

Romania's surprising tourism brand

The first large-scale effort to promote Romania as a desirable tourist destination took almost ten years to initiate after the fall of communism. This first campaign, called "The 1999 Eclipse," was launched around the total sun eclipse of August 11, 1999. Using a budget of $1.5 million[38] the print materials that advertised the event at international fairs promised that the eclipse would be fully visible from various places in the south of Romania. Only a small number of foreigners showed up, however. Four years later, the second advertising campaign produced a series of sixty-second television ads titled "Romania–Simply Surprising," which aired between June and August 2004 on

the Euronews, Eurosport, Discovery, CNN, and BBC networks. Although professionally produced, they were criticized for their "infantile logo" and for having failed to distinguish Romania from other countries.[39] One of the more memorable ads from the series relies on the repetition of syntactic similarities for a rhetorical surprise effect. It showcases seemingly ordinary attractions that reveal true touristic treasures to the careful observer. Thus, what may appear at first sight as a "simple sculpture" is in fact "a Brancusi masterpiece." "A simple cross" is revealed to be part of the Merry Cemetery at Săpînţa, where carved, colorful crosses caricature the imperfections of the deceased. In the same vein, the image of "a simple house" turns out to be the Castle of Dracula while what looks like "a simple landscape" is in fact "the Danube Delta, a living paradise."[40]

Nation branding entered a much more aggressive phase in 2009, when Romanian Tourism Minister Elena Udrea spearheaded the production and release of a musical-viral-tactical "tourism anthem" with the tag line "Come to Romania, The Land of Choice." The "anthem" was widely viewed and incited a heated debate about national identity. Harshly criticized on Romanian blogs and television discussions for its cheesiness and deceitful portrayal of the country as a glamorous destination, the clip also generated a series of viral response videos that ironically foregrounded what the ad concealed about Romania. Videos named "The Truth about Romania," or "We Are the End of Choice" mocked Udrea's branding attempts, pointing to the dire situation of overpriced and underbooked seaside hotels.

Udrea's nation branding project turned her into a most controversial figure. Young, attractive, outspoken and given to blunders, she is often compared to Sarah Palin. Her decision to pose in sexy lingerie for glossy magazines and her "suspiciously close" relationship to president Traian Băsescu repeatedly made Udrea a target of ridicule. Accused of being the president's protégé, Udrea was also the subject of a parliamentary inquiry, which recommended conducting a criminal investigation into the way she used public money to fund media campaigns. When she was appointed Romanian cabinet minister responsible for regional development, in charge of administering the EU budget for the development of housing, infrastructure and tourism, Udrea became the subject of international news. *The Times Online*, *Welt Online*, and *7sur7* expressed serious concerns about how Udrea would handle the European aid budget given the serious allegations against her poor management, incompetence, and the shady transactions associated with her rich husband.

Rejecting all accusations as unfounded and politically motivated, Udrea continued the "Romania – Land of Choice" campaign in August of 2009 with a new series of ads and postcards, which enlisted Nadia Comăneci, Ilie Năstase and Gheorghe Hagi as ambassadors of Brand Romania. Following the recipe that brought success for countries such as Croatia and Bulgaria, Udrea released a new set of TV ads promoting Romania on Eurosports and CNN. One of these ads challenges potential tourists to confront the surrealistic

projections associated with Romania. It begins with the image of a happy bride in the company of four men dressed in suits. "This is Romania," Nadia Comăneci playfully comments, "the only country where a woman has the right to marry four men at the same time!" "Discover Romania, the country where people are riding zebras," urges Ilie Năstase. "Come to Romania and test the fish fruit!" Gheorghe Hagi beckons, leaving us with the image of a tree full of hanging fish while a British voiceover says: "You know nothing about Romania, do you? It's time to come and discover it. Real Sites. Real Experiences. Real People."[41]

These new ads, however, were also received with skepticism by the Romanian press and public. Bloggers complained that the three famous Romanian sports stars are too old to make a strong impact on younger audiences in the West. Journalists pointed out the fact that Udrea wasted too much money on badly planned campaigns that would ultimately prove futile.[42] Newly released statistics reveal that the ads were ineffective in attracting more tourists. Despite the €1.5 million used for the Land of Choice campaign,[43] the number of tourists who spent the night in Romanian hotels decreased by 21.9 percent in 2009. Newspaper articles with headlines suggestively titled "Romanian Tourism in Free Fall," "Fewer Foreign Tourists in 2009," or "Romania, the European Country with the Lowest Number of Foreign Tourists," reported a shrinking number of foreign visitors even though Udrea had hoped for an increase of at least 10 percent. Journalists were even more frustrated to report that the Ministry of Tourism spent an additional €45,000 to find out how the money she had initially spent was wasted. The expensive study ordered by the tourism minister showed that 48.2 percent of those interviewed had never even heard about her campaign, while only 33 percent of those who did hear about it had any hopes that it would be effective.[44]

Romania's latest tourist brand logo, "Explore the Carpathian Garden," was launched in July 2010 at the World Exhibit in Shanghai. It consists of the word "Romania" and a green leaf meant to symbolize nature, freshness and growth. The campaign was created by the international public relations consortium THR/TNS, which had previously developed successful tourism brands for Spain, Croatia, Greece and Poland. The company was to be paid €900,000 in the original contract, which included quantitative and qualitative research in addition to the brand creation. The inviting green logo and the concept of the garden were meant to offset the sense of fear and insecurity that tourists tend to associate with Romania, according to company CEO Eulogio Bordas. Since most people know the country from negative news, Bordas commented, "they think it's a country where one is not safe. And since the garden is perceived as [safe], the symbol is meant to change the existing perception."[45]

Soon after the brand's release, however, a scandal erupted when a blogger speculated that its logo was taken from clip-art style images on the Internet and strongly resembled the leaf on England's ecological buses. THR/TNS was accused of plagiarism and Udrea decided to freeze the payments until the issue

is resolved. The "unlucky leaf" scandal, as it came to be known, prompted widespread international criticism. The news media bemoaned the fact that even if the funds came from the European Union, they were unwisely spent at a time of austerity. Some pointed out that the message "Explore the Carpathian Garden" not only fails to express anything about Romanian identity but also falsely promises an unrealistic ecological tourism that the Carpathian region is not ready to deliver.[46] Others decried that the logo is a generic copy of an image and concept foreign to Romania and fails to express anything about the country's specificity. Writing for the daily Austrian newspaper *Wirtschaftsblatt*, marketing consultant Michael Brandtner commented that the image of the Carpathian Mountains is too blurry for an international tourist to begin with. At the end of his harsh critique of Romania's branding efforts, he suggests that a new logo such as "Explore Dracula's Land" may create a clearer image about Romania in the tourists' minds.[47]

Conclusion

Romania's struggle to "upgrade" its national destination brand offers ample lessons beyond the case's national specificities. Most importantly, it calls for critical caution against the myth of market rationality that underscores nation-branding experts' narratives of progress and democratization. The attraction of rationalism held out to countries that follow the neoliberal mantra of the global marketplace helps cover up the mechanisms that sustain hierarchies among individual countries' access to positive self-representation. Nation branding is described by its academic experts and practitioners as not only an optimizing market force but also an ideologically neutralizing one, which purifies nationalism of its pesky and dangerous political content. Such a gesture is conditioned on erasing the violent history of Eastern Europe's colonial dependence on the West and Western Europe's continued interest in sustaining a two-tiered Europe where Eastern economies perpetually depend on and compete with one another for Western investment. It conjures up a blank slate, a level playing field on which to re-draw nations as corporations engaged in friendly competition, rather than bloody war, channeling their citizens' love of brands instead of irrational hatred of others.

For states such as Romania not to "choose" the glorious opportunity to start over amounts to irrational and indefensible wallowing in traumas of the past. Such an assessment does not simply ignore nationalism's burden but actually exploits its appeal by erasing the violence at the heart of the banality of national pride. It compels but also authorizes nation-states to continue to suppress internal divisions and rally their citizens around the cause of the nation's economic recovery, visualized as a unifying brand. The post-national rhetoric of freely constructed individual and collective identities, in effect, perpetuates nationalism. It pits branded nations against one another in defensive competition and continues to preclude transnational affiliations and

alliances among subnational constituencies. What Nadia Kaneva calls "national identity lite" in an analysis of Romanian and Bulgarian nation-branding efforts is, in effect, a depoliticized, dehistoricized approach. Finally, instead of rallying the population around an attractive brand, the new narratives have caused further internal division and deepened the crisis of postsocialist states by increasing citizens' suspicion about opportunistic governments who betray what is perceived as the true national cause and sell out the country.[48]

The contradictions of this logic readily present themselves when a nation's most lucrative prospect of a destination brand is the dual legacy of "Draculescu." For the Romanian state, let alone the actual citizens, constructing a "fair, accurate and positive" brand is hindered by Western investment in the dictator and the vampire, the last nostalgic reservoirs of East European otherness. While the state has followed rational marketing recipes and tried to reinvent itself as a desirable destination for rural tourism, for foreign visitors Romania has come to function as one of the last authentic destinations of dark tourism, where one's search for otherness and quirkiness is still rewarded, unlike in Budapest or Prague, shinier places that have more confidently erased their communist past. In Romania, Ceausescu's monstrous monument, the People's Palace, continues to be the most visited tourist site, despite postsocialist administrations' efforts to turn it into the seat of Parliament, the symbol of a democratic future.[49] This persistent desire for inferior otherness within Europe has also revived the Dracula myth, associated with the dark Carpathian mountains at the edge of civilization, where civil unrest and instability are the very stuff of the people's and the place's soul and where fictional horror is always ready to burst into real-life violence. Geographer Duncan Light writes, "Romania's biggest attractions for Western tourists – Dracula and Ceausescu – both confirm the country's Otherness."[50] Even though both the government and the people have been eager to forget the communist period and steer foreign fascination away from Dracula, "they are able to have little influence on the situation, since both the promoters and consumers of this heritage are external to the country. This is yet another example of the way in which Romania finds itself powerless in the face of the forces of globalization."[51]

Even the otherwise sympathetic Duncan Light implies that Romanians should get over their stubborn reluctance, grow up, move into the market economy and start to cash in on the money-earning potential of communism and mysticism.[52] This implication is fully borne out in marketing analyses such as this: "As Anholt put it, image and progress go hand in hand, as a positive image is the consequence of progress, rather than vice-versa, and when the two of them are carefully managed in tandem, they help each other along and create an accelerated change."[53] Even though the authors acknowledge that "branding initiatives become effective only beyond a certain level of competitive performance,"[54] they conclude that the way to do this is by making the

Romanian business environment "more friendly" by reducing restrictions that foreign investors have to face. Ultimately, they propose, Romania should capitalize on the positive images already existing abroad, those associated with Nadia Comăneci, Gigi Hagi, Constantin Brancusi, Eugen Ionesco, "the Romanian beautiful women," the People's House and, yes, Dracula Castle, "which should be used as Romanian symbols to promote Romania abroad."[55]

However, embracing negative stereotypes in a self-exoticizing gesture does not guarantee economic success either, as Dina Iordanova shows in her discussion of the Romanian government's ill-fated project to establish a Dracula theme park. Enterprises such as this, undertaken only to satisfy a Western projection, may in fact lead to a sense of split national identity and strengthen the need to hold on to an – often defensively chauvinistic – "true" national self, which is essentially different from the negative projection.[56] Instead of reducing xenophobic hostility and rendering nationalism outdated, the self-branding options available to nations like Romania may well produce the opposite result.

On a European and, by extension, global scale, the contradictions of postsocialist nation branding efforts suggest that place branding only holds out the offer of a good, free, democratic and peaceful life to those nations and individuals who have already made it. Romanians' sarcastic viral reaction to their government's "Land of Choice" campaign is grounded precisely in the recognition that the choice to sample Romania is only offered to foreign visitors with ample leisure time, mobility, and resources. Of course, selected groups and citizens in Romania and other postsocialist countries already belong to a transnational class who seem to have fulfilled the EU's promises implied by "unity in diversity." However, place branding advocates gloss over the differential and historically engrained access to mobility, money, and freedom that ultimately determines representations. Instead, they tend to produce sweeping pronouncements about the current era, when one can "more easily achieve a better social position in terms of earnings and consumption" and "people can easily move from one place of residence to another" because "developments in industrial society created the seeds of a great liberty of movement and a more individualized way of life."[57] Some of these accounts naturalize the neoliberal rationale of place branding through organic metaphors borrowed from kinship, molecular biology, architecture, and new media networks. "Place branding needs to have the mobility to transcend borders as efficiently as the web."[58] The unspoken but familiar neoliberal assumption that underscores such claims about individual choice and unlimited social and geographical mobility is that those who have not earned such rights are not worth being counted at all. "In short, the individual can decide where he or she wants to be and where he or she wants to go," declares one branding optimist.[59] The individual here is by no means any citizen, let alone any inhabitant of the European Union, but one who already possesses Anholt's euphemism for the essence of successful branding, "competitive identity."[60]

While nation branding has not fulfilled its economic promises for much of the postsocialist population, there is the possibility that, in some cases at least, it may at least have a productive demystifying and denaturalizing effect on nationalism. Returning to Lury's understanding of brands as objects that are at once actual and virtual, abstract and concrete, she argues that this incompleteness of the brand is what opens it up to critical investigation. She draws an analogy between brands and Manovich's description of computer games: "They pretend to be intelligent only by tricking us into using a very small part of who we are when we communicate with others."[61] "The [sociological] imperative is to enable us to use more of ourselves in our communication with objects and introduce not only probabilities but also real possibility into the thing, the abstract object that is the brand."[62] In the case of nation branding, one wonders if it may open up the possibility not just to fix stereotyped nations in unequal economic relations but also to demystify the uncritical love of nation, which nurtures the spectrum of dangerous sentiments that range from ethnocentrism through xenophobia to fascism. By rendering the constructedness of such love almost cynically bare, perhaps market rationality may eventually do some good in countering the affective promises of patriotism.

Notes

1 My thanks to Alice Bardan, whose research on Romanian nation branding was an indispensable resource for this chapter. Our co-written article on the subject, "Vampire Branding: Romania's Dark Destinations," is forthcoming in *Nation Branding and Eastern Europe*, ed. Nadia Kaneva (London: Routledge).
2 Naomi Klein, *No Logo* (New York: Picador, 2000).
3 Celia Lury, *Brands: The Logos of the Global Economy* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 5–11.
4 Quoted in Lury, *Brands*, 5.
5 Kevin Roberts, *Lovemarks* (London: powerHouse Books, 2005).
6 Sarah Banet-Weiser and Charlotte Lapsansky, "RED is the New Black: Brand Culture, Consumer Citizenship and Political Possibility," *International Journal of Communication* 2 (2008): 1248–68.
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8 Peter Van Ham, "Branding European Power," *Place Branding* 1, no. 2 (2005): 122–26.
9 Van Ham, "Branding European Power," 123.
10 Julie Aveline, "Branding Europe? Branding Design and Post-National Loyalties," *Place Branding* 2, no. 4 (2006): 336.
11 Aveline, "Branding Europe?" 338.
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13 See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006).
14 Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995).
15 Melissa Aronczyk, "New and Improved Nations: Branding National Identity," in *Practicing Culture*, eds Richard Sennett and Craig Calhoun (London: Routledge, 2007), 105–28.

16 Homi K. Bhabha, "DissemiNation: Time, Narrative and the Margins of the Modern Nation," in his *The Location of Culture*, (New York: Routledge, 1994), 139–70.

17 Aveline, "Branding Europe?", 336.

18 Aihwa Ong, *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press), 6.

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20 See Joao R. Freire, "Geo-Branding, Are we Talking Nonsense? A Theoretical Reflection on Brands Applied to Places," *Place Branding* 1, no. 4 (2005): 347–62; Henry Stewart, "Literature Review: Place Branding: Overview of an Emerging Literature," *Place Branding* 1, no. 1 (2004): 107; Philippe Mihailovich, "Kinship Branding: A Concept of Holism and Evolution for the Nation Brand," *Place Branding* 2, no. 3 (2006): 230.

21 Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (London: SoHo Press, 2011). First published by Westminster: Archibald Constable and Company, 1897.

22 Robert A. Saunders, "Buying into Brand *Borat:* Kazakhstan's Cautious Embrace of its Unwanted 'Son,'" *Slavic Review* 67, no. 1 (2008): 63–80.

23 Jim Slotek, "Beyond Borat," *Well and Tribune*, July 4, 2009. Retrieved from http://www.wellandtribune.ca/ArticleDisplay.aspx?e=1642195.

24 B. Pancevscki and C. Ionescu, "Borat Film 'Tricked' Poor Village Actors," *Mail on Sunday*, November 11, 2006. Retrieved from http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-415871/Borat-film-tricked-poor-village-actors.html.

25 In *Evenimentul Zilei*, one of the leading newspapers, Iulian Comanescu wrote: "How innocent can one be … to take part in that entire circus. To pretend that you just didn't know what you were doing is, given the circumstances, hypocritical." He concludes: "There is no need to lament and ask ourselves why Romanians became Borat's virtual Kazakhstan: The answer is easy: because Nicolae Tudorache, a villager from Glod, agreed to wear a plastic penis as hand prosthesis in the film. And he took four dollars for this." See I. Comanescu, "Romania, Kazahstan virtual" [Romania, a virtual Kazakhstan], *Evenimentul Zilei Online*, 2006, Retrieved from http://www.evz.ro/articole/detalii-articol/421434/COMANESCU-Romania-Kazahstan-virtual/. Special thanks to Alice Bardan for this information.

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28 R. M. Vintilescu, "Vedeta de la Travel Channel ne-a zdrobit pe banii nostri," ["The Star from the Travel Channel Crushed Us and We Paid the Bill"] *Cotidianul*, March 4, 2008. Retrieved from http://www.cotidianul.ro/vedeta_de_la_travel_channel_ne_a_zdrobit_pe_banii_nostri-40506.html.

29 These comments were found at http://anthony-bourdain-blog.travelchannel.com/read/romania-what-the-hell-happened?fbid=xxDzmq8QRd7#comments and accessed in March 2008. They are no longer available.

30 Anthony Bourdain, "Romania: What the Hell Happened?" *Travel Channel*, February 26, 2008. Retrieved from http://anthony-bourdain-blog.travelchannel.com/read/romania-what-the-hell-happened?fbid=xxDzmq8QRd7#comments.

31 By blurring distinctions among Eastern European countries, *Top Gear* recycles a long tradition of writing and filmmaking that has presented the Balkans as an amalgam of undistinguishable countries. Take, for instance, Agatha Christie's character Boris Anchoukoff from *The Secret of Chimneys* (1925), a man with Slavic

features and a harsh foreign accent, who prompts a shocked Englishman to comment after hearing him speak: "Pure bred Herzoslovakian, of course. Most uncivilized people. A race of brigands. Population, chiefly brigands. Hobby, assassinating kings and having revolutions" (qtd in Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 122). Christie's invented country is set in Herzoslovakia, whose capital "Ekarest," blends in a portmanteau word "East" and the Romanian capital of "Bucharest."

32 In *The Wheel Spins*, for instance, Iris travels "off the map," leaving behind her girlfriends to admire the marvelous natural scenery of the mountains. Soon, however, we learn that the mountains "overhung her like a concrete threat … As she cowered under the projecting cliffs, she felt that they were but to shake those towering brows, to crush her to powder beneath the avalanche of boulders. They dwarfed her to insignificance. They blotted out her individuality. They extinguished her spirit" (2002, p. 20).

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34 Costin Giurgea, "Top Gear in Romania," November 20, 2009. Retrieved from http://www.topgear.ro/blog/2009/11/top-gear-in-romania-click-play/comment-page-1/

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40 In 2006 a new ad was produced to boost domestic, rather than international tourism. Led by the strap line "a trip is a lesson of life," it invited Romanians to experience their country first-hand. In 2007, when the town of Sibiu was named the European Capital of Culture, it became a targeted destination for tourism promotion. To see the ad for Sibiu, European Cultural Capital for 2007, go to: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FpJ6SeDwxLc&feature=related.

41 The ad is available at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o8_JKZ9k_d8&feature=player_embedded.

42 Among others, Udrea was reprimanded for having paid Ilie Nastase €10,000 to participate in a branding event for Romania in Paris by playing an exhibition tennis match. Investigations brought to light by the daily *Cotidianul* revealed that Nastase was playing the same match for the French Tennis Federation. As he had scheduled the event and was being paid by the French anyway, many deemed Udrea's actions a waste of money. See L. Gheorghiu, "Udrea a platit 10.000 de euro ca sa joace tennis cu Năstase," [Udrea Paid 10.000 euro to Play Tennis with Năstase] *Cotidianul,*

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58 Mihailovich, "Kinship Branding," 243.

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60 Simon Anholt, "'Brand Europe' – Where Next?" *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* 3 (2007): 115–19.

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Culture and national border administration in 21st-century Japan

Koichi Iwabuchi

A new global cultural order

With the acceleration of globalization processes that prompt cross-border flows and circulations of people, money, and media and proliferate the transnational organizations and institutions which promote such moves, the diminishing significance of national boundaries has been much discussed. Highlighted instead are notions such as hybridization, deterritorialization, transnationalism and diaspora, which draw our attention to cross-border connections and interactions. However, the "national" imagination and framework have paradoxically become stronger and more mundane, even though the ethno-cultural homogeneity of the nation is seriously put into question. This is occurring as cross-border flows and connections are regulated by the interplay of states, media and cultural industries, which shapes the global ordering of national borders.

In the first decade of the 21st century, there has emerged a widely shared trend among the developed countries in dealing with transnational flows of culture, people and capital. There is a strong predisposition to control ethnic inflows out of concern for national security. We have been witnessing the rise of a reactionary attack against migrants together with the growing sense of longing for a safe and caring community, which is provoked by widespread anxiety with the exacerbation of unemployment, crime and terrorism that globalization processes are supposed to promote. Especially after the September 11, 2001 events, the security control of national borders was much tightened and we have witnessed the rise of national integration discourse, which lays an explicit blame on multiculturalism for being divisive of the nation and even harmful to national integration. In contrast to this, cultural outflows are eagerly promoted by states. Transnational encounters with "foreign" cultures through cultural commodities such as foods, films, TV, music, and tourism have been considerably put forward under globalization processes, which tend to be easily consumed and enjoyed unlike the case of ethnic inflow. This trend has been much intensifying in the new millennium, as service, information and entertainment sectors have become a sizeable

part of the global economy, and many countries including non-Western ones have developed the production capacity of media culture. Accordingly the exports of those cultures have become a significant matter for the state policy. Increasing international rivalry requires states to develop cultural policy that promotes soft power, creative industries or content business with the aim to export more cultural commodities and enhance the brand images of the nation. This is not to overestimate the power of the state in promoting cultural export. Cultural production and its international circulation are primarily organized by media and cultural industries. What has become apparent is that the expansion of market-driven globalization of media culture has pressured the state to enact policies friendly to market forces.

While the promotion of the international circulation of media cultures appears to be a vector of regulating cross-border flows unrelated to the border control of ethno-flows and cultural differences within, the former eventually works to re-demarcate and re-solidify national cultural borders in a way to discourage public engagement with multicultural questions. A neoliberalism mode of industry–state alliance for the promotion of media cultures engenders the idea of culture being circulating, rivaling, consumed and branded "inter-nationally," based upon the assumption of the nation as the unit of global cultural encounters. It induces the essentialist reassertion of what constitutes national culture and who has the ownership of national culture as well as the enhancement of the sense of national pride among the members of the nation observing the rise of "our" culture in the world. More importantly, this also has a serious implication on the recognition of cultural differences within the nation. The market-driven promotion of national cultures has been institutionalized at the expense of the advancement of cultural engagement with making marginalized voices expressed and heard in the public space. This chapter examines how this has been occurring in the Japanese context.

In the following text, I will first discuss how media cultural flows are promoted and administered both by media/cultural industries and the state in an inter-nationalized process of glocalization. What emerges in the process is the propagation of "brand nationalism" which aims to export media culture for the promotion of national interests. This works in tandem with "banal internationalism," which takes for granted the view that the nation is the unit of global cultural encounters. The inter-nationalized circulation and encounter of media culture has become a site in which the sense of belonging to the nation is invoked and where highly instrumental uses of culture are strongly propagated in the name of national interests. I will discuss some ways in which the intensifying promotion and circulation of media culture in an inter-nationalized manner administer the national cultural borders in a mutually exclusive way, suppressing and marginalizing public engagement with multicultural questions.

Cool Japan and inter-nationalized glocalization

Since the early 1990s when the so-called post-bubble economy collapsed, Japanese economic power has been declining. Its prolonged dire situation was further highlighted by the rise of other Asian economies such as China and India in the new millennium. Instead, what attracted wider attention in the same period is the rise of Japanese media culture in the world (i.e. specifically including Europe and the USA). We have witnessed, at least since the early 1990s, the emergence of "soft" nationalism in Japan—that is, a narcissist discourse on the global spread of Japanese popular cultural "software" such as Japanese animation and video games, set against technological "hardware."[1] But the scale and extent of euphoria seems much larger in early 21st century Japan. On their 2003 album titled *MIJ*, for example, a popular idol group in Japan, SMAP, declares the sense of pride in observing the spread of Japanese cultures and Japanese people whose cultural works are renowned in the world:

> There has been no time when so many Japanese are in the world centre stages. While Japan is not economically vigorous, now is a great historical moment to Japan. Isn't it really good for us to live as Japanese at this moment? News coverage on those Japanese who are doing fascinating works in the world makes us empowered and feel proud to be Japanese … Our slogan is MIJ = Made in Japan!

Indeed, the international advent of Japanese media culture looked in sharp contrast to the fall of the Japanese economy and thus inspired a social and personal lift in a stagnated Japan.

This is not to say that there is no ground at all for the self-praise of the spread of Japanese culture in the world. The spread of Japanese media culture in the world has a long history, but it has become much more conspicuous in the last decade as several commentators of Euro-American media have attested to Japan's increasing cultural influence, a "cool Japan" phenomenon: "During the 1990s, Japan became associated with its economic stagnation. However, what many failed to realize is that Japan has transformed itself into a vibrant culture-exporting country during the 1990s";[2] "Japan is reinventing itself on earth—this time as the coolest nation culture."[3] Coining the term GNC (Gross National Cool), one journalist even declared the rise of Japan as a cultural superpower in the international arena.[4]

This sort of Euro-American attention eventually gave credence to a celebratory discourse of "cool Japan" within Japan. The rise of cool Japan discourse, it can be argued, still testifies that Euro-American appreciation has a determining power on the international quality of Japanese culture, as was the case with traditional culture such as Ukiyoe. Actually East and Southeast Asian markets are far more receptive to Japanese cultures in terms of scale and

variety, but this has not spurred the same extent of euphoria. In this sense, cool Japan is a Euro-American phenomenon, which illustrates its lingering cultural hegemony at least in the Japanese context.[5]

However, the rise of cool Japan discourse in Japan shows the novelty in some important points. The rise of the global spread of Japanese media culture and associated discourses on cool Japan should be understood in the context of the intensification of the global governance of cultural production, marketing and circulation, which is organized by the interplay of neoliberal marketization of culture and a collaborative state policy that endorses it. Under such an ordering of cultural globalization, cultural flows and encounters have come to be promoted and comprehended in an inter-national framework—"inter-national" in the sense that the intensification of cross-border media culture flows strengthens the nation-to-nation relations and rivalry. I would suggest that cool Japan be symptomatically read as the rise of cultural internationalism in which media cultures of various countries including non-Western ones are circulating and competing with each other as national brands.

The mounting internationalism is principally promoted through two levels of "glocalization." Many argue that despite the prevalent view of homogenization or Americanization of the world, globalization is in reality constantly giving rise to cultural diversity.[6] Globally disseminated cultural products and images, many of which are made in the U.S., are consumed and received differently within the specific cultural framework formed by the political, economic and social contexts of each locality and by people of differing statuses depending on their gender, ethnicity, class, age and other factors. At the same time, in each locality these products and images are reconfigured and mixed with local elements, resulting in the creation of new products that are more than mere copies. It can be argued that the intensification of cultural mixing and translation, together with the development of digital communication technologies and the expansion of media culture markets in previously less developed regions, has been a significant background to the rise of non-Western media culture in the last decade or two in which Japanese media culture is one prominent example. However, it is crucial to remember that de-centering or de-Westernizing processes of cultural globalization eventually accompany a "peculiar form of homogenization" as they foster and promote a particular kind of diversity that is governed and structured by the logic of capital that cultural diversity sells.[7] Here, as Wilk argues, cultural difference is expressed and revealed "in ways that are more widely intelligible" through "universal categories and standards by which all cultural differences can be defined."[8] The world is becoming more diverse through standardization and more standardized through diversification. Especially important in what Wilk calls a "structure of common difference" are the global diffusion and sharing of cultural formats such as genre, style, code, and event—most of which "originate" in the U.S. and other developed countries—through which various differences are articulated in the international arena.

This process is first and foremost organized and promoted by transnational corporations, most of them based in developed countries, which pursue profits by tailoring glocal cultures in world markets through transnational tie-ups and partnerships. In this process of glocalized production and marketing of cultures, the national has been functioning as one of the most profitable local markets, as a unit of commercialized cultural diversity in the world. The glocalization process has accompanied the institutionalization of what Urry calls a "global screen," a site through which "localities, cultures and nations appear, to compete and mobilize themselves as international spectacles and consumed by others, compared and evaluated, and turned into a brand."[9] In the last two decades, we have indeed witnessed a substantial increase in the number of occasions of international media spectacles and cultural exhibitions and festivals such as sports events, film festivals, TV/music awards, food expo, pageant, and tourism as well as the proliferation of satellite and cable broadcasting and audiovisual internet sites. Global mass culture formats do not just provide the basis for the expression of national cultural specificity but also work as an inter-national interface that highlights culture as national brand and urges people to conceive the nation as the unit of global cultural encounters, a point I will further discuss later.

State collaboration for national branding

Internationally orchestrated glocalization prompts, and in turn is reinforced by, the increasing interest in national branding policy, in which states are eager to take an initiative by joining forces with media culture industries. While we can agree with Urry that the conception of the nation has "significantly become more a matter of branding" in the age of cultural internationalism, this does not necessarily affirm his point that "the nation has become something of a free-floating signifier relatively detached from the 'state' within the swirling contours of the new global order."[10] Truly, as suggested above, the market force of cultural commodification plays a significant role in the reconstruction of national feeling, and a national code is no longer unreservedly under the state's rigid control of maintaining a homogeneous territory. However, we would be going too far if we entirely lose sight of the significant role of the state in effectively endorsing and institutionalizing market-driven inter-nationalism, through which the symbolic re-enactment of the nation is put in order.

Japanese embracing of "cool Japan" in the 21st century, unlike soft nationalism in the 1990s, has accompanied an active development of national cultural policy discussion and the establishment of many committees focusing on the further promotion of Japanese media and culture in the world. Here "soft power" is a key word. Soft power is a term coined by American political scientist Joseph Nye. In 1990 Nye argued that "soft co-optic power" is a significant factor in the attainment of global hegemony by the United

States: "If [a dominant country's] culture and ideology are attractive, others will more willingly follow."[11] While the United States' use of media culture for advancing public diplomacy is not new, Nye considered it imperative that the U.S. government develop a soft power policy in the post-cold war era, which makes strategic use of a globally diffused media and consumer culture, as they are symbolically associated with American images and values in a positive manner. In the 21st century, the concept of soft power attracted renewed attention in face of the Bush administration's hard-line policies especially after 9/11, but this time the discussion of soft power was extended to many parts of the world, including Japan. When he first advocated "soft power," Nye dismissed Japan's soft power as negligible since Japan, no matter how its cultures are globally spread, lacks an associated "appeal to a broader set of values."[12] However, more than ten years later, Nye also has come to acknowledge Japan's cultural influence in the world: "Japan's popular culture was still producing potential soft-power resources even after its economy slowed down. Now, with signs of a reviving economy, Japan's soft power may increase even more."[13] This is another endorsement of Japan's soft power by the American authority to encourage the Japanese government to go for a soft power policy with a particular interest in enhancing the international image of Japan through the development of media culture industries and the promotion of cultural diplomacy.

While the idea of using the display of Japanese (traditional) culture to improve Japanese images in the world has been part of the state policy at least since the 1970s in the postwar era, Japan's soft power turn is marked by its being deeply market-oriented and concerned with international rivalry. It is, I would suggest, symptomatic of the globalization of soft power discourse, which goes along with the expansion of inter-nationalized mode of glocalization. As many countries other than the United States have significantly developed the capacity to produce media cultures, other states began, even more aggressively, pursuing the economic and political utility of media culture to win the international competition, though the term "soft power" was not necessarily used. "Cool Britannia" might be the best-known policy and practice of this kind, but in East Asia too, Korea, Singapore, China, Taiwan and Japan are keen to promote their own cultural products and industries to enhance political and economic national interests.[14]

With the growing recognition of media culture as a useful resource for promoting political and economic national interests, the globalization of soft power in fact brings about the divergence from Nye's argument in some significant respects. One such divergence is related to the uses of media culture as resource. According to Nye, media culture is just one of three possible resources for the enhancement of a nation's soft power, the other two being respectful foreign policy and attractive democratic values established in the relevant society.[15] While he clearly warns against conflating the international appeal of media cultures with soft power, stressing that soft power

will not be enhanced unless the other two resources are well developed and properly made use of, it is precisely this kind of conflation that is actually a prevalent operational principle of cultural policy discussions in many parts of the world. This is related to another important divergence from Nye's soft power, which is the development of cultural policy in line with the neoliberal marketization of culture. While Nye's argument of soft power clearly distinguishes between culture as soft power and economy together with military force as hard power, the economic dimension in this use of culture is seen as even more central in the era of neoliberal globalization, as the widespread discussion of creative industries clearly shows.

What it all comes down to is that globalization of soft power discourse has given rise to a different logic of cultural administration, which can be better termed brand nationalism as it aims to pragmatically and opportunistically promote the production and circulation of media culture for the purposes of enhancing national images and economic profits in the international arena. Soft power and national branding policy share the basic principle of using media culture for a narrow and focused set of national interests. However, brand nationalism needs to be even more critically interrogated in terms other than soft power inasmuch as what has been widely institutionalized is not just opportunistic discourses on the uses of media culture but also a highly market-centered vision of cultural policy. Brand nationalism straightforwardly and uncritically relies on and legitimizes the neoliberal marketization of culture and institutionalizes the inter-nationalized glocalization of media culture, whereby national identity is reconceived in a non-inclusive manner that disregards issues of cultural difference and marginalized voices within the nation.

Brand nationalism

The interplay between the marketization of media cultures and state policies has widely disseminated and institutionalized the conception of the nation as a powerful brand unit of global cultural encounters. This introduces a sense of national belonging as well as an essentialist conception of national culture. Most obviously, as the number of international occasions in which people are encouraged to participate by displaying a particular national flag and to feel a sense of belonging to a particular nation increases, it produces a sense of national pride when "our" national cultures do well. Or it might stir up the sense of regret, anger and frustration when others beat "us." As previously mentioned, the international standing of Japanese culture has become an important resource for the evocation of national pride due to the decline of the Japanese economy. A 2010 survey on what aspects of Japan people are proud of showed that while Japan's technology and traditional culture were still conceived as the most significant, 90 percent of respondents in their 20s and 80 percent of those in their 30s stated

that they were proud of Japan's soft power such as anime and computer games.[16]

It can be argued that this only displays a trivial, transient consumption of and identification with the idea of the nation, lacking the substantial meanings of the narrative of the nation. Fox argues, in his examination of the rise of nationalist sentiment through national holiday commemorations and international football competitions, that the participation in such occasions certainly whips up the sense of national belonging, but this does not automatically mean the actual surge of nationalism: "while holidays and sports had the capacity to make the students national, there is little to suggest that they made them nationalist. Indeed, student indifference to nationalist politics more generally … suggests that any experience of collective belonging neither led to nor followed from heightened nationalist sensitivities."[17] His point is a rather significant reminder for us to avoid making an easy conclusion about the rise of nationalism in the age of global interconnectedness without closely analyzing the complexity of people's participation in the inter-nationalized cultural fiesta. Similarly, during the FIFA World Cup Soccer championship in 2002, which was co-hosted by Korea and Japan, some observed the rise of "petit nationalism" in Japan.[18] For the first time since their defeat in World War II, people in Japan (especially young people) cheerfully and innocently rejoiced at being Japanese: they openly waved the national flag, painted it on their faces, and sang together the national anthem that praises the emperor's everlasting rule—conducts that had long been kind of restrained in the public space as they were considered a negative reminder of Japanese imperialism. Such practices attracted much discussion in Japan as some thought it potentially a dangerous expression that could easily lead to an exclusive cultural nationalism. However, this phenomenon should not be automatically interpreted as the rise of a fanatical nationalism since the survey regularly shows that only a small portion of Japanese youths feel a sense of pride in their country.[19]

In a presentation about nationalist sentiment among young people in Japan participating in international cultural events and observing the ascent of Japanese culture in the world, university students argue that: "Japanese nationalism is a fashion statement. It is something like owning a brand commodity. People do not care about the origin, history, meaning and value of the ideas of 'Japan.'"[20] This also seems to attest to the rise of superficial, contentless identification with the nation as brand form, engendered by the internationalized glocalization. As Fox rightly argues, we need to distinguish between national cohesion and nationalist passion: "National content does not follow unambiguously from national form."[21] However, although not showing chauvinistic aggression, the cheerful approval of nation form as brand in an international arena is not totally trifling if we take seriously Wilk's argument that the hegemony of the global cultural system is "not of content, but of form." It is a mode of cultural hegemony that "celebrate(s) particular kinds of diversity while submerging, deflating or suppressing others."[22] As suggested

earlier, glocalization organizes cultural diversity through form and the national is constituted as a highly commercialized brand form in the process. And this globally shared form of the nation as brand highlights cultural difference and diversity in an inter-nationalized manner, suppressing other kinds of difference, especially those within the nation.

In branding national culture in the international market, widely known stereotypical images and touristic icons of traditional culture such as samurai spirit, sushi or Kyoto are often reused to make a distinction. This again shows a shallow, kitsch appropriation of traditional culture for commercial purposes but it also engenders an essentialist delineation of national culture and its ownership. In explaining the global popularity of Japanese comics, animations and otaku culture, historically inherited national cultural essence is often mentioned. Edo culture of the 18th century, for example, is said to be the root of the contemporary Japanese cool cultures, and the necessity of reevaluating Japanese traditional cultural sensitivities and aesthetics is proposed in order to further promote cool Japan and enhance Japan's soft power.[23] Hence a growing interest in promoting cool Japanese culture in the world instigates racialized discourses that evoke Japan's distinctive cultural aesthetics, styles and tastes with the metaphor of "cultural gene" or "cultural DNA." As one policy maker of "Japan Brand project" states, what is necessary is to re-define "Japan" and to seriously consider how to properly discern Japanese cultural DNA and strategically standardize it so as to successfully input it into Japanese products and services.[24] Such an ahistorical conception of the nation as organic cultural entity fails to bear in mind that national boundaries are discursively drawn in a way to suppress various socio-cultural differences within and disavow their existence as constitutive of the nation. Although this way of constructing national identity is always constitutive of the modern nation-state building, the intensifying inter-national cultural encounters and competitions now play a more significant role in it and the exclusive notion of national belonging has become even more pervasive in society at large.

A market-oriented aspiration for national branding subtly facilitates the re-demarcation of "core" national culture and racializes its ownership in the name of national interests to win the international rivalry. The promotion of cultural production is an important cultural policy as it not only puts forward commercially viable cultural production but, more crucially, various cultural expressions and creativities in the public space that reflect hitherto marginalized interests, practices and voices of diverse members of society. However, brand nationalism actually disengages this focal rationale. There has been considerable cultural diversity within Japan: in addition to long-standing ethnic minorities such as resident Koreans and indigenous people, the Ainu, in the late 1980s a strong Japanese economy attracted many foreign laborers and migrants. International marriages have recently come to constitute about 5 percent of newly married couples each year, nationally; in Tokyo, it is about

one out of ten. Furthermore, the sharp decline of the birth rate is so serious that more intake of foreign labor is an urgent matter for the Japanese economy. The number of foreign-nationals residing in Japan currently amounts to more than two million people, and if we include those who were naturalized and those Japanese nationals who have mixed ancestries, the racially and ethnically diverse constitution of society is much more noticeable. Thus, Japan is undoubtedly a multicultural society and multicultural situations will be more intensifying. While policy makers have belatedly begun discussing the selective acceptance of foreign labors—though the term "migration" is not yet officially used—and some Japanese ministries have recently started putting on the national agenda the issue of "multicultural co-living" (*tabunka kyousei*), it seriously lags behind the multicultural reality in terms of the fair recognition of cultural differences and the development of related educational curriculums, anti-racism campaign, and media services that provide more spaces for diverse concerns and voices. No serious attempt to develop cultural policy that does justice to and soundly respond to existing cultural diversity has been yet made on the national level.[25] This is in sharp contrast to the rapid progress of cultural policy for national branding, which endorses the pragmatic uses of culture for narrow-focused national interests and does not include any aspects of socio-cultural democratization. Moreover it even denotes a cultural policy that engages with multicultural situations within Japan.

In early 2006, for example, the expansion of international broadcasting services had begun to be seriously discussed in Japan. The services commenced in February 2009, with the purpose of enhancing Japan's national image in the world for the promotion of political and economic interests. However, discussion of the services occurred when foreign nationals residing in Japan complained to then Prime Minister Koizumi about the lack of diversity in broadcasting in Japan. What was at stake in the beginning was the failure of the Japanese broadcasting system to provide due public service to people of diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds who were residing in Japan. The question of the broadcasting system's publicness, in the sense of doing justice to the diversity of citizens whose voices and concerns are not well reflected in the mass media, is indeed an urgent one inasmuch as Japanese society is becoming more multicultural. However, in the cabinet meeting a few days later, the concerns were translated into a strategy aimed at the enhancement of national images in the world by developing an English language international broadcasting service. Here the preoccupation with national branding clearly discourages cultural policy's vital task of bringing the hitherto marginalized voices and concerns of various citizens into the public sphere and of ensuring that they are heard. Brand nationalism effectively suppresses serious discussions about significant cultural issues in the service of wider public interests, disregarding questions concerning who owns culture and whose culture and voice are marginalized.[26]

Banal inter-nationalism

It can also be argued that the increase in the international cultural encounter that "makes people national" is no less significant, given that the penetration of the sense of national identity takes a less assertive, "banal" form.[27] And the fragmentation of national community and the intensification of transnational cultural connections under globalization processes give further significance to such a banal sense of the national being explicated in the inter-national framework. The increase in encounters with people, goods and media cultures from many parts of the world, reinscribes the existence of national cultural boundaries in public debate. This only works to make the banality of the nation more solid and engenders banal inter-nationalism, to follow Billig's term "banal nationalism."[28] Banal inter-nationalism understands cross-cultural encounters and cultural diversity as those between mutually exclusive national cultures, with the entrenched infiltration of a conception that the global is the congregation of nations. Such comprehension is based on a container model of territorialized national culture and thus the principal idea of methodological nationalism, "the self-evidence of a world ordered into nation-states,"[29] is no longer just an academic matter but has deeply permeated people's minds and mundane practices thanks to the amplification of "reciprocal, international recognition."[30]

Like brand nationalism, banal inter-nationalism further marginalizes already marginalized voices and multicultural situations within the nation, while overtly highlighting them in a particular manner. The rise of banal inter-nationalism for example works to make growing multicultural situations traded with a mediated inter-national spectacle that represents cultural diversity as one between nations. Migrants and ethnic minorities are encouraged to express their difference in public as long as they show a sign of belonging to other nations, a sign assuring that they will never be full members of the nation even if they have a Japanese passport.[31] Mediated inter-national spectacle thus encourages people to cheerfully consume cultural diversity within Japan in a way to render the issue of inclusion/exclusion in the Japanese imagined community irrelevant. A more pertinent case to be considered here is how the inter-national consumption of media culture produced in a particular nation intersects with the social recognition of those diasporas and migrants who have some association with that nation. This speaks to the complicated question of whether and how the rise of culture of their "home" empowers diasporas and migrants. A researcher of Asian-Australian studies expresses a wishful view about the persisting stereotypical images of the Chinese diaspora in Australia: "As we become more dependent on the dollars from the economies of Asia, I would hope that the vestige of 19th century orientalism will fade away."[32] It might be the case that the rise of the Chinese economy would not just improve international images of China but also enhance social recognition of those diasporas and migrants living outside China who identify

themselves and are identified as "Chinese" in the host society. However, the empowerment of diasporas through their association with the positive images of the home country is precarious as the issues concerning their identities and differences that are contextualized "here" tend to be effortlessly understood via the (positive) perception of culture and people over "there."

An inter-nationalized media culture consumption overwhelming and suppressing local multicultural politics is illustrated by the way in which the consumption of Korean media cultures had impinged on the social recognition of resident Koreans who have been long suffering from discrimination as ethnic minorities in Japan.[33] Since the mid-1990s, media culture circulation and connections within East Asian countries has been escalating. This has engendered co-production and co-promotion of various media cultures as well as people's mutual understandings. Furthermore, mundane consumption of media cultures of other East Asian countries has also advanced self-reflexive attitudes to rethink one's own life, society and relation to other Asians.[34] In the Japanese context, this propensity is most clearly illustrated by the consumption of Korean media cultures. Positive reception of Korean media cultures in Japan has greatly facilitated self-reflexive views of self/other relations among audiences. According to one survey in Japan, nearly 60 percent of respondents said that they have much better images of Korea, realizing how their images of Korea were biased, and about 40 percent said that they became more willing to learn about political and historical issues between Japan and Korea. Furthermore, 25 percent said that they became more interested in the issues of resident Koreans in Japan.[35] With audiences' impressions about Korea appearing to be positively changing, the survey also suggests that an approving consumption of Korean media cultures has improved the images of resident Koreans in Japan. Although Koreans' issues had been long neglected in the public sphere, Japanese mass media, including TV drama series, also began dealing with their voices and identity issues more often than before.[36]

However, there is an uncritical muddling up of the people and culture of Korea with the lives and experiences of resident Koreans in Japan, most of whom were born and brought up in Japan. The enhancement of the images of resident Koreans in the public space has been achieved principally within the framework of inter-national media consumption at the expense of advancing the recognition of resident Koreans as constitutive citizens of Japanese society. While the progress of media and cultural connections between the two countries compels a positive reconsideration of Japan-Korea national and cultural borders, the stress on inter-national cultural exchange between the two countries both in the social discourse and in the perception of audiences tends to overlook the complication of the in-between-ness that resident Koreans have experienced and struggled with in Japanese society. The positive reception of the Korean media culture tends to engender a naïve conflation of the lives and experiences of resident Koreans in Japan with and their understanding through

the culture and people of present Korea, making them perceived and represented as "Korean nationals living in Japan." The recognition of Korean residents as fellow citizens living here with us is subsumed by their recognition as those belonging to another nation "over there." As a corollary to this, historically constituted discrimination and identity distress that many resident Koreans have been experiencing in Japan have not been well comprehended and their differences were not fully recognized as those of citizens belonging to Japanese society. These considerations highlight the difficulty and necessity to go beyond the nation-centric framework. Inter-nationalized media culture circulation and consumption underlines cultural diversity in the world and cultural difference within the nation, while not seriously attending to multicultural and postcolonial questions.

Concluding remarks

As national borders continue to become more porous in terms of cross-border flows of capital, commodities, media, and people, border control measures are constantly reformulated to tame disordered flows. By focusing on the Japanese context, this chapter discusses how the promotion of cross-border circulation of media culture eventually plays a significant role in governing national cultural borders. The rise of brand nationalism and banal inter-nationalism has been advanced by the interplay of market-driven glocalization and the state policy of national branding to an extent that seriously impacts the disengagement with multicultural politics within the nation. Much has been researched on the complexity of transnational flows of media cultures in terms of symbolic hybridization/localization, semiotic consumption/appropriation and activist inter-net connectivity that go beyond—if not totally displace—rigidly demarcated national borders. It seems imperative for media and communication researchers to attend as seriously to the way in which the transnational circulation and connection of media cultures are subtly inter-nationalized to work with the containment of multicultural questions.

   This is especially urgent as the promotion of a national brand in the international market has been institutionalized on a global level as a hegemonic discourse on the uses of media culture, a discourse that marginalizes discussions of the role of the media in advancing social democratization and cultural citizenship. The impetus of promoting the outflow of cultural commodities has been intensifying in many developed countries, including non-Western ones such as Japan, together with the tightening of border control of ethnoflows and the rise of exclusionary national integration discourse. This pattern of border control of ethno-cultural flows for the sake of national interests eventually marks the country's international standing. It displays a new mode of "cultural imperialism" under a global cultural order, given that the opposite movements such as the significance of emigration of labor forces for national income and cross-border influx of media cultures are observed in many less

developed countries. Researchers of transnational media culture connections need to keep a critical eye on how they act on multicultural questions nationally and transnationally to fully grasp the global ordering of national cultural borders.

Notes

 1 Koichi Iwabuchi, "Soft Nationalism and Narcissism: Japanese Popular Culture Goes Global," *Asian Studies Review* 26, no. 4 (2002): 447–69.
 2 *The New York Times*, November 23, 2003.
 3 *The Washington Post*, December 27, 2003.
 4 Douglas McGray, "Japan's Gross National Cool," *Foreign Policy*, May–June (2002).
 5 Regarding the uses of the Western Orientalist gaze in the construction of Japanese national identity, see Koichi Iwabuchi, "Complicit Exoticism: Japan and its Other," *Continuum* 8 no. 2 (1994): 49–82.
 6 See, e.g., Ulf Hannerz, *Transnational Connections: Culture, People, Places* (London: Routledge, 1996).
 7 Stuart Hall, "The Local and the Global: Globalization and Ethnicity," in *Culture, Globalization, and the World-System*, ed. Anthony King (London: Macmillan, 1991).
 8 Richard Wilk, "Learning to Be Local in Belize: Global Systems of Common Difference," in *Worlds Apart: Modernity Through the Prism of the Local*, ed. Daniel Miller (London: Routledge: 1995), 118.
 9 John Urry, *Global Complexity* (London: Polity, 2003), 107.
10 Urry, *Global Complexity*, 87. See also Gerard Delanty, *Citizenship in a Global Age* (London: Open University Press, 2000).
11 Joseph Nye, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 1990), 32.
12 Nye, *Bound to Lead*, p. 32.
13 Joseph Nye, "The Allure of Asia and America's Role," Global Communications Platform (December 5, 2005). http://www.glocom.org/opinions/essays/20051205_nye_allure/index.html
14 Especially the Korean government has actively promoted Korean media cultures overseas since the late 1990s, thereby contributing to the wide spread of Korean media cultures in Asian markets, known as the Korean Wave. See Chua Beng-Huat and Koichi Iwabuchi, eds., *East Asian Pop Culture: Approaching the Korean Wave* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2008).
15 Joseph Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004).
16 "Poll: 95% Fear for Japan's Future" (June 12, 2010). http://www.asahi.com/english/TKY201006110455.html.
17 John E. Fox, "Consuming the Nation: Holidays, Sports, and the Production of Collective Belonging", *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 29, no. 2 (2006): 232.
18 Rika Kayama, *Puchi Nashonarizumu Shôkôgun* (Petit Nationalism Syndrome) (Tokyo: Chûkôshinsho, 2002).
19 For example, in a recent public opinion survey, only 15 percent of respondents feel that way. *Asahi Shinbun,* March 16, 2005. Even when people express their sense of patriotism, this can be an expression of self-critical attachment to the nation. According to a survey conducted in 2007, 78 percent of respondents said "yes" to "I have a strong or moderate sense of patriotism." This is a substantial increase in

the sense of patriotism, but at the same time, among those people, 85 percent agreed that they need to be critical of Japan's colonial history. This suggests the possibility of critical patriotism arising: the stronger the sense of patriotism, the more critical of Japan's colonial history!

20 Kwansai Gakuin University students' presentation at Cultural Typhoon Shimokitazawa, July 1, 2006.
21 Fox, "Consuming the Nation", 232.
22 Wilk, "Learning to be Local in Belize," 118.
23 For example, Takuji Okuno, *Japan Cool and Edo Culture* (in Japanese) (Tokyo, Iwanami Shoten, 2007).
24 E.g., "What is cool Japan?" (http://blogs.yahoo.co.jp/hiromi_ito2002jp/57705983.html); "Let's sell cool Japan in the world market!" (www.kanto.meti.go.jp/seisaku/uec_lec/data/lec01_kouen_22fy.pdf).
25 Koichi Iwabuchi (ed.) *Tabunkashakai no "bunka" wo tou* (Interrogating "Cultural" Issues of Multicultural Society) (Tokyo: Seikyûsha, 2010).
26 See Nick Couldry, *Why Voices Matter: Culture and Politics After Neoliberalism* (London: Sage, 2010).
27 Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995).
28 Billig, *Banal Nationalism*.
29 Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Shiller, "Methodological Nationalism and Beyond: Nation-State Building, Migration and Social Sciences," *Global Networks* 2, no. 4 (2002): 301–34.
30 Ulrich Beck, *Cosmopolitan Vision*, trans. Ciaran Cronin (Cambridge: Polity, 2006), 28.
31 Koichi Iwabuchi, "Multinationalizing the Multicultural: the Commodification of 'Ordinary Foreigners' in a Japanese TV Talk Show," *Japanese Studies* 25, no. 2 (2005): 103–18.
32 Jen Tsen Kwok, Tseen Khoo, and Chek Ling, "Chinese Voices: Tseen Khoo, Jen Tsen Kwok and Chek Ling Reflect on the Political Culture of the Asian-Australian Community," *Meanjin* 63, no. 2 (2004): 149–60.
33 For a detailed analysis of the following, see Koichi Iwabuchi, "When Korean Wave Meets Resident Koreans in Japan," in *East Asian Pop Culture*, eds. Chua Beng Hua and Koichi Iwabuchi (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2008).
34 See for example Koichi Iwabuchi, *Recentering Globalization: Popular Culture and Japanese Transnationalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002); Koichi Iwabuchi, ed., *Feeling Asian Modernities: Transnational Consumption of Japanese TV Drama* (Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong Press, 2004).
35 Hayashi Kaori, "Dorama Fuyu no Sonata no Seijiteki naru mono" (Political Aspects of Winter Sonata), *Journal of Information Studies*, Interfaculty Initiative in Information Studies, The University of Tokyo, 69 (2003): 56–81.
36 Iwabuchi, "When Korean Wave Meets Resident Koreans in Japan."

Being modern

Situating the grand narrative

Chapter 9

Media, modernity, and postmodernity

Piotr M. Szpunar

While postmodernity ushered in a general distrust of grand narratives, various academic and popular circles continue to use concepts to order experience as ubiquitous and all encompassing processes; one need only think of globalization or modernization. At their most fundamental level, the two pieces in this section take on two such orders of experience: modernity and history—not in order to challenge them but rather, make sense of or redeem them. Common to the essays by Sabry and Scannell is an insistence on examining such concepts phenomenologically. In both cases, this approach does not mean abandoning the concepts as abstractions in favour of a grounded examination of the practices and processes thought to be encompassed in "modernity" or "history." While this is a vital part of the projects Sabry and Scannell suggest, at their core is an examination of how these orders—as concepts, as abstractions—are communicated and what they communicate within local contexts. Most simply, Sabry's "Towards a vertical hermeneutics of the modern: On modernness" seeks to examine what "being-modern" means to the anthropological subject while Scannell's "The centrality of televisions of the center in today's globalized world" posits a challenge: how can individuals bear witness to the grand narrative of history in the subjective and local contexts to which they are anchored (for Scannell, individuals are subjective, History is not).

Postmodernity plays a significant role in defining each author's project. For Scannell, postmodernity's incredulity toward the grand narrative of Enlightenment is "understandable." While one can claim that this is an understatement considering the projects of colonialism and exploitation that such narratives have been used to justify historically, Scannell's point is that the dismissal of grand narratives disconnects us from the past, and that by giving up on (the grand narrative of) History, we also declare the end of hope (because History is of the time of the present and *future*). It is important to note that the history Scannell refers to is History: singular (of humanity in general), linear and progressive. More plainly, Scannell posits that there can be no vision of the future by living in a depthless present devoid of this kind of past; more simply, this order of experience is indispensable for creating

meaning. Scannell, in contrast to the standard postmodern position, does not claim that a grand narrative of the history of humanity makes little sense, or that it is counter-intuitive, but only that it is not possible to write this history, or for anyone to experience its "truth" from their singular position—surely an attempt to avoid the appropriation of this order of experience for projects seeking to consolidate power. This does not mean, however, that such a narrative does not exist, even if it is beyond our grasp. In fact, it unfolds (is communicated) through media around the world. This process, occurring across innumerable media, is unobservable from a single vantage point; the challenge is to bear witness to it.

Sabry goes even further in borrowing from Latour's *We Have Never Been Modern*. The argument here is that what we refer to as the "modern constitution" is dependent on several basic "discursive double separations" (i.e., dichotomies and binaries) such as human/nonhuman, society/nature, God/state, etc., that have never in practice been achieved. However, their invocation in discourse— even while those very discourses belie them—allows the moderns to do "anything and its opposite." What has proliferated in such a milieu Sabry argues, via Latour, is the in-between or the hybrid which occurs in the overlap of, or oscillation between, A and B (e.g. society/nature). For Sabry, this does not mean that we are not modern—the order is not being discarded but made sense of—but that we are modern in different ways, ways that are made visible within the hybrid objects found in-between the double separations that are never achieved. These experiences and objects, which are also the space of modernness, are the subject of Sabry's project; the ethics of Emmanuel Levinas are one such hybrid. Important in making sense of this order of experience are the distinctions between modernity, modernization and modernness. Modernization is a process, while modernity is the signifier of that order of experience we call being modern (i.e., "modernness"). In turn, modernness is "that kind of being in the world which we call modern;" a being must be examined phenomenologically. This requires us to replace the postmodern hermeneutics of suspicion toward modernity (but not discredit them), and begin with a hermeneutics of trust. More plainly, Sabry contends that we cannot genuinely examine what it means to be modern for the anthropological subject when beginning from a point in which modernity, as well as that which we call modern, is viewed as threatening or inauthentic: it represses those in-between objects, such as Levinasian ethics which Sabry claims are crucial to modernity. Similar to Scannell's project, power is wrestled from overarching hands and placed into local contexts in which this order of being is communicated and where it "does" its work.

While acknowledging the values of a postmodern approach—both Scannell and Sabry do not completely do away with postmodernity's stance toward grand narratives (i.e., we cannot approach History from any transcendent vantage point; and modernity does not manifest itself in the same way across all contexts)—each author attempts to challenge it in different ways (which

implicitly acknowledges postmodernity as an order of experience rather than a radical break from such orders). Scannell claims that the grand narrative of the history of humanity does exist even if we cannot access it, and this must be taken into account even when examining how this narrative is communicated in local contexts. Sabry's piece maintains the postmodern stance toward grand narratives, in that he shows that the modern or modernity has never been constituted in a unitary fashion across contexts (or through the double separations central to this conception). However, this necessitates an examination of this failure as the site of modernness which in turn requires a hermeneutics of trust rather than of suspicion. It is in what is central to these challenges that the authors together break away from commonplace "critical" scholarship, for better or for worse: both Sabry and Scannell posit an order of experience that simply *is* (*being* and *life* respectively). This is the very thing that allows the authors to converge on a position that posits the hermeneutics of suspicion as a barrier to studying the phenomenological dimension of "history" and "modernity" (how and for what purpose they are communicated in local contexts) and calls for a different approach to grasp these orders of experience.

Chapter 10

The centrality of televisions of the center in today's globalized world

Paddy Scannell

In today's global communications galaxy it is important to try and grasp the relationship between the parts and the whole: the various tele-technologies in play (telephone, radio, television, internet), separately and together, and how they play with, off and against each other. In this essay I want to defend a claim for the centrality, in all of this, of "televisions of the center." This claim has a polemical edge to it, in light of a line of criticism, going back quite some time, that has sought to "de-center" the very concept of "the social center" and to critique the role of central television institutions in maintaining "the myth of the social center."

Today (the word) "television" is the place-holder for a variety of different kinds of things that go by that name. First there is the object; the thing, the technology. Originally it was understood and known familiarly as the box in the family living room.[1] Since then the form of the technology has diversified. From being an immovable object set in a certain living space it has become portable and mobile. Television content is now accessed through immobile TV screens, portable laptop devices and mobile cell phones. The screen itself has changed dramatically. The original TV image was in low definition black and white, displayed by a clunky box-like machine on a squarish screen with a 4 by 3 aspect ratio. Today's screens are flat and can be displayed on walls in public as well as private spaces: they are much larger, wide screen (with a 16:9 aspect ratio), in color and with a far sharper (high definition) image resolution that produces a much more pictorial viewing experience. Originally television was delivered as a free-to-air service via linked terrestrial signal transmitters. Now it can be instantly delivered over the internet, by geo-stationary satellites or down-the-wire (cable) transmission. Originally the content of viewing was produced by a small number of large central institutions who transmitted a continuing through-the-day sequence of mixed programs (news, sport, variety, entertainment) for nation-wide audiences. These are now called "televisions of the center." Once they were known as the BBC, CBS, NHK, SABC and so on: the national broadcast service-providers for whole populations in Britain, the USA, Japan, South Africa, and elsewhere.

These services all had a set of defining characteristics that I will come to in a moment. The question is whether they have, any longer, a significant role to play in today's globalized, media-saturated world. Who needs them? And more critically, who wants them anymore? They were good enough for their times perhaps, but were problematic in some basic ways and have now been superseded by newer ways of delivering audio-visual content that have overcome their limitations. Those limitations were primarily to do with two things: the liveness of the technology and channel scarcity. Each was progressively overcome via technological innovations that were keenly sought after in the industry. The obvious problems posed by live transmission (and all early broadcasting on radio and television was live) were overcome by continuing innovation in recording technologies; from analogue video-tape of the mid-1950s to the crucial switch to digital recording technologies from the late 1970s onwards. The other initial limitation, channel scarcity, had wider social and political implications and it is with these that this essay is largely concerned. The roll-out of television, as an every-day resource with a wide social uptake, began as a free-to-air *broadcast* service, following the model of radio broadcasting. It depended on the availability of usable frequencies in the electromagnetic (or radio) spectrum. The spectrum was and remains a finite natural resource that has been subject to national and international regulation to manage and arbitrate between intense competing demands for intrinsically scarce, usable and interference-free frequencies. The overcoming of channel scarcity meant finding an alternative to terrestrial broadcasting as the means of transmitting and supplying television content for viewers. Solutions were found in the switch from analogue to digital encoding of audio-visual content and in alternatives to terrestrial wireless transmission—cable services (from the beginning) and, later, satellite provision in the 1980s created the conditions of possibility for the multi-channel television environment with which we (in the advanced economies of the world) are now familiar today. Hard on these developments came the internet with the potential to stream traditional television content on demand and to allow for a quite new kind of home-made video content, produced and posted by anyone for anyone on YouTube, Facebook and personal blogs.

The ramified implications and consequences of these developments impacted directly on the original broadcasting institutions, the services they provided and their relationship with those they serviced—their audiences.[2] Broadcasting is a one-to-many system of delivery. It is also a live-and-in-real-time service that delivers programs at different times of day, through the day in an irreversible temporal sequence. Much of today's broadcast output (with the exceptions of news, sport, and some reality and studio shows) is no longer live at the point of transmission. But all of what makes up the daily schedules (whether live or recorded) is in real time—that is to say, transmitted at and for a particular time of day. If for whatever reason you can't catch the program at its time of transmission you have, alas, missed it. The video

cassette recorder (a now obsolete technology of the 1980s) allowed individuals to begin to record material for later viewing at their convenience. A decade later multi-channel cable and satellite services included the provision of on-demand movies and TV drama series, again making video content available (for a price) at any time for any viewer. Internet streaming (Hulu, for instance in the USA) extended the principle of on-demand viewing no longer tied, as in broadcasting, to the real-time constraints of daily program schedules.

This dissolution of time-bound constraints on individual viewing was one indicator of a fundamental shift taking place in the late 20th century in the relationships of supply and demand between producers and consumers. In conditions of scarcity the producer is master, the consumer the servant who must take what the master offers—there is no choice. In the formative decades of the television era—from the 1950s through the 1970s in North America and Europe—a small number of central broadcasting institutions supplied a daily schedule of programs for whole populations within the territories of the nation-state in which they were situated. In Britain the initial monopoly of the British Broadcasting Corporation gave way from the mid-1950s to a duopoly of the BBC in competition with a single nation-wide commercial network known as ITV (Independent Television). By the start of the 1970s British viewers had three choices: two channels provided by the BBC and one by ITV. In the USA the three national commercial networks (CBS, NBC, and ABC) likewise provided the vast American audience with just three channel choices. It was in this decade that the academic study of television first got going on both sides of the Atlantic. It is scarcely surprising that perceptions of its then very new social impact and effect were shaped by the fact that the supply of TV content was in the hands of a very few institutions whose output was watched, day in day out, by whole populations.

From this perspective viewers were at the mercy of privileged, powerful central institutions who positively and negatively "set the agenda." Their output was defined by a principle of inclusion (what was news or entertainment was what was broadcasters defined as news or entertainment) and by a principle of exclusion which defined what was *not* news, *not* entertainment. And of course, this was never simply a matter of content. It was strongly normative. By what they included and excluded, these televisions of the center set the limits of tolerance, drew the boundaries of the permissible in political, social and cultural terms for whole societies. In doing so, it was argued at the time, they drew the ideological veil over what they were doing. The work of inclusion and exclusion (the "editing" of social reality) was concealed in the seemingly transparent access to the social whole that the totality of output appeared to deliver—the whole range of mixed program genres: news, sport, talk and game shows, drama, comedy. The first thing critical television studies insisted on was the constructed character of all this output, whose modes of presentation were designed to conceal that very fact. Viewers were beguiled into taking the partial, selective, edited versions of reality that television

offered as if they are transparent representations of contemporary social life. This "naturalizing" effect (it's obvious; it's natural; it is so) was what Stuart Hall called the *ideological effect* of television—a powerful and influential critical interpretation of the role of television as a central social force in contemporary society that worked to reproduce "ruling ideas and values"— the dominant ideology thesis, in short.[3] In the 1970s and 1980s this made a lot of sense. Television then was indeed national television of the center and articulated the center's vision of the people-as-nation in its output. On both sides of the Atlantic daily programming (factual and fictional) clearly did articulate a particular vision of Americanness and Britishness, a people and a way of life, whose evasions, distortions and exclusions needed to be critically decoded.[4]

An early, emergent sense of TV beyond the nation-state, a glimpse of globalized television, began to appear in the late 1970s and it seemed to be dominated by the American networks. The British sociologist, Jeremy Tunstall, wrote a book called *The Media are American* that came out in 1977.[5] At the same time, in the USA, Herbert Schiller published *Communication and Cultural Domination* in which he argued that the American entertainment industries were dominating the whole world (the cultural imperialism thesis).[6] This seemed, for a while, nothing less than the obvious truth. The global success of *Dallas*, which played in over 150 countries around the world, appeared as the conclusive ocular proof of American cultural hegemony in the 1980s.[7] A quarter of a century later, in our world today, this is evidently no longer the case and in 2007 Tunstall published a follow-up called *The Media Were American*.[8]

The imagined community of nations (in Britain and America, at least) was beginning to unravel even as it was identified as such in Benedict Anderson's landmark study of 1983.[9] Since then the world as a whole has risen above the horizon of national borders to become part of everyone's experience everywhere today. In this process, the monopoly and with it the authority (the moral hegemony) of central, national media institutions collapsed.[10] It has been de-centered (as they say) since the 1980s by two related developments: the end of channel scarcity and the extraordinarily rapid rise of digital, interactive media. The three American networks and the British duopoly no longer defined between them what television amounted to for their nation-wide audiences. New niche taste-publics were catered for in generic channels on cable and satellite services that unbundled the general publics constituted by national channels in their daily mix of programs. On demand TV challenged the fixity of their schedules. In all this one constant remained: television was still a high-end product created and provided by media professionals for audiences whom they defined. For most of the 20th century the culture industries controlled the supply and definition of mass information and entertainment for mostly silent masses. But this master–servant relationship was shaken and stirred by the rise of all those new interactive technologies of the 1990s

that gave power to the people. The internet and the cell phone, separately and together, have developed in a remarkably short time, as new counter-cultural media to the old media and culture industries. The new digital technologies of the last 20 years allow individuals to create their own cultural content, to interact directly (and often critically) with old established media and finally, and perhaps most crucially, are key resources for hitherto undreamed of forms of social networking that have created new counter-publics, in local, national, regional and global contexts.

A pivotal study of television that bore witness to this historic transition from a nation-centered to post-national mediated world was published in 1992 by Daniel Dayan and Elihu Katz. The germ of the idea for what became eventually *Media Events*, was Katz's perception of the importance of what he called "festive" television, its "high holidays," when ordinary television is momentarily suspended and something extraordinary takes its place—the funeral of John F. Kennedy, the wedding of Lady Diana Spencer and the Prince of Wales, the journeys of Pope John Paul II and Anwar el-Sadat to Israel, the TV debates of 1960 between Kennedy and Nixon, Watergate, the revolutionary changes of 1989 in eastern Europe, the Olympics and others.[11] This initial indicative check-list is a rather mixed bag that includes a few unexpected happenings and more strictly political events along with the great occasions that Dayan and Katz are mainly concerned with—its French title, *La Télévision Cérémonielle* captures the book's focus more exactly. For this is a book about television with "a halo," auratic television we might call it with a nod in the direction of Walter Benjamin. The aura of the extraordinary event shines brightly as it stands out from the ordinary, the humdrum and routine. The occasional event comes with (creates and generates) a sense of occasion, a moment out of the ordinary. The television event is like a holiday (a holy day; a day set apart). Normal routines are suspended as whole populations take time out from the ordinary complexities and animosities of daily life.[12] Collective attention is monopolized by and focused on the event which is covered by television *en direct*, live and in real time as it really happens. The time of the event, the time of television and the my-times of countless viewers all converge in the experiential, living enunciatory now of the event as it unfolds in a shared, common public time. All this, obviously, could only be delivered by central, large-scale institutions with the necessary resources to cover great occasions.

For Dayan and Katz these were moments when national populations (and now and then the whole world) took time out from the grittiness of daily life and came together in celebration, united through the power of central broadcast media. As such media events were *shared* experiences and hence moments of social integration. It was a small step from this to a view of media as *agents* of social integration, promoters of national unity and thus, whether wittingly or not, serving to underpin the central values, or myths of the society-as-nation. This was the objection forcefully made by Nick Couldry to what he called

Media Rituals.[13] He took Dayan and Katz to task for their uncritical celebration of media events and the televisions of the center that broadcast them. Couldry professed himself to be suspicious of media events—especially any notion that they might be sources of "some deeper truths" about the social world. In his thinking events morph into "rituals" and he is critical of them. In the Durkheimian tradition of sociology "ritual" has often been associated with claims that it produces or maintains social *integration*.[14] For Couldry however (following Marcel Bloch and Pierre Bourdieu) rituals are about "the management of conflict and the masking of social inequality." Rituals, in the innocent view of them (that Dayan and Katz embrace) "function to confirm an established social order that is somehow 'natural' and beyond question."[15] It is this "myth" that Couldry seeks to deconstruct—a common sense, but in fact invisible ideological construction of social reality as obvious, natural and given (what everybody knows, thinks, feels, etc.). This is "the myth of the mediated center."[16]

It is the assumption (of which Dayan and Katz are guilty) "that media *are* the center of social life. To believe that is to believe, first, that social life has such a thing as a 'center' and, second, that media are that center, or at least the privileged route to it."[17] Dayan and Katz's "highly influential account of 'media events' is entirely dependent on that myth's functional assumptions."[18] So what exactly is the myth? Is it the very idea that societies *have* social centers? Or that there are, indeed, social centers but they manufacture myths about themselves (perhaps to disguise their centrality)? Or maybe the idea of the social center is an invention (myth) promoted by media? But are there central media—or are these too "myths"? Or do central media fabricate myths about the social center (of which they are a part) and thereby legitimate themselves *and* the social center at one and the same time? In different places Couldry seems to entertain versions of all of these without ever bringing them together in a fully coherent way—unsurprisingly, perhaps, for they are more than a little contradictory.

To disambiguate the myth of the mediated social center we need to untease the tangled relationship between social reality and the part played by media in its construction. So do societies have social centers that are independent of any media(ted) construction of them? What, for any of us, is the social center of existence? It is surely, in each case, the social world in which I find myself to be—my own, immediate environment, the life-world in which I, in each case, live. Each and all of us are at the center of our own (social) world. It is a small world, perhaps, the environment (the place) where I live but it is the immediate center of *my* existence. But my-world is not the center of the social world in which I live (and were I to think so I would be deluded). Complex historical societies do indeed have "centers" and they have names—London, Paris, Rome, Tokyo, New York, Mumbai, Beijing, etc. All these are real places and real centers of economic, political and cultural life in the countries of which they are major, if not capital cities. People who live in London or New York

undoubtedly feel (know) that they are living where "it's all at." And people who live in Iowa City or Selby (the small Yorkshire town in which I grew up) know that they live a long way from the metropolitan center(s) of American or British life.

It is a basic point, but one that Couldry simply fudges. Most countries today really do have centers of economic, political and cultural power. Not all though. After six years of living and working in America I have come to realize that it has no single center in the way that London or Paris is evidently so for the British and French. In America the great cities (New York, Chicago, Boston, San Francisco, New Orleans, and so on) are isolated metropolitan oases in a vast, sparsely populated continent. America, truly, has no "center"—certainly not Washington DC, its de facto political center, which is (presently, at least) regarded with scorn, resentment or indifference by pretty much the rest of the country outside of its beltway. But even so, America's cities exert a strong gravitational pull within their own and neighboring states. Where I live and work Chicago is *the* place to go for a weekend to experience the buzz of a great city and what it offers—its music, art, jazz, theatre, restaurants; its fabulous architecture, its location. …

The drawing power of great cities is as old as history. Doubtless there are mythical elements to this (the streets of London are *not* paved with gold) but cities always have been and will always remain real *power* centers of economic, political and cultural life. A crucial function of modern media has been to connect all those people and places far from the center with the centers of contemporary life. In real terms this has meant (and continues to mean), in the first place, the centers of national life, country by country. Radio was the first of the great tele-technologies that have, in the course of the last century, created unprecedented direct and immediate access for whole populations; not to each other (the telephone does that) but to the public life of their own countries at first and then, at an ever accelerating pace, to the whole world. In this they were extending the social (as distinct from informational) role of newspapers as they developed mass-circulation readerships in the course of the 19th century.

Raymond Williams acutely characterized the European drama of the late 19th century (the plays of Ibsen and Chekhov in particular) as seeming to consist of people staring out of windows in provincial drawing rooms "waiting anxiously for messages, to learn about forces 'out there,' which would determine the conditions of their lives."[19] The transport and communications infrastructure of the modern world that began to be put in place in the late 19th century was intended to facilitate the management of economic, political and military life. But Williams draws our attention, at the same time, to the hesitant discovery of the wider social and cultural applications of the emergent global communications infrastructure in the era of high modernity. That is what we see taking place in radio's "utopian moment" in the early 1920s when its form and content had yet to be discovered and it seemed, on first contact,

like a magic carpet transporting astonished listeners to faraway places and peoples and happenings with which they had had no previous possible connection.[20] All the evidence, from every country, confirms that for most people in the early 20th century the horizon of their lives, in comparison with ours at the start of the 21st century, was extraordinarily limited. People stayed where they lived and a journey of more than a few miles was always a major excursion. On the whole they knew no more than what was happening in the street where they lived, or in their neighborhood or town at most. What was everywhere longed for by everyone was contact with that great and public world, over the hills and far away, that lay beyond the horizon of immediate existence.

This was what radio and, later, television were uniquely able to provide: live connection with people, places and occasions as they unfolded in the immediate now of real time. David Cardiff and I have shown that a key function of early broadcasting was to gather up what Walter Benjamin calls "the scattered fragments of genuine historical experience" and work them into an annual calendar of events.[21] This work was begun by the BBC in the 1920s as it transformed itself from a network of local stations into a centralized national institution broadcasting to the whole of the United Kingdom. The components of a national culture were beginning to converge in early 20th century Britain. But the full convergence of these developments, their synthesis as elements of a single corporate national life available to all, awaited the establishment of broadcasting in its applied social form and the quite new kind of public—the *general* public, a public commensurate at times with the whole of society—that it brought into being. From the early years of broadcasting through to now, this general public has been most strikingly manifest in what Dayan and Katz call "media events."

Media events are embedded in the public calendars of whole societies (nations) and marked up on the private calendars of individual lives. They are (can *only* be) delivered by what Dayan calls "television of the center," broadcasting institutions with the reach and resources to provide coverage of events from where they are taking place, live and as they happen, to whole populations.[22] Big media events are not hosted by small local or community broadcast services. They emerged in the course of time as broadcasting, which began everywhere on a local basis, developed into centralized national institutions that provided services for whole populations. By the time Dayan and Katz took note of the phenomenon of "media events" they were becoming global in their reach and impact.

Let me sum up at this point. Societies (countries, nation states) do have centers and margins. The same is true of larger entities, such as Europe. Germany and France are politically central European countries and, in different ways, Ireland, Portugal and Finland are peripheral or marginal in relation to them. Many countries (not all) have central media institutions that provide news, entertainment and other services that are distributed to all parts of the

country. As such they connect individuals in the places where they dwell to the social, economic, political and cultural centers of the countries in which they live. The question is: how to interpret this? As we have seen, Media Studies, when it got going in Britain forty or so years ago, took a largely critical stance towards television in particular and its role in articulating the "national-popular." From this skeptical optic, television was an agent of social control, an instrument of "governmentality" that worked to sustain the existing order of things. It was thought of, in Louis Althusser's terminology, as an ISA—an ideological state apparatus.[23] Couldry thinks so too. He is suspicious of media events that, in his view, "articulate the power-related, hegemonic imagination of the media as the center of present societies."[24]

Well you *could* see them like this, if you are so-minded. Dayan and Katz were keenly aware of the kinds of objection that were likely to greet them, and in their preface they cheerfully and robustly anticipated and sought to fend them off:

> The live broadcasting of history? Don't they know that history is process, not events? Certainly not ceremonial events! Don't they know that media events are hegemonic manipulations? Don't they know that the royal wedding [in 1982, of Lady Diana Spencer and the Prince of Wales] simply blotted out the ethnic rioting that had occupied the streets of London the day before? Haven't they read Daniel Boorstin's *The Image?*[25]

They knew full well that they were taking a very different stance to most current academic orthodoxies. They were at odds with the historians and their dismissal of what Fernand Braudel had dubbed *histoire événementielle*; with the critics of "the society of the spectacle" from Boorstin to Debord; with Cultural Studies and its hegemonic preoccupation with "the political;" with the social and political scientists—notably Kurt and Gladys Lang.[26] They parted company with the Frankfurt School luminaries, including Walter Benjamin. They were at odds with all those, who one way or another were dismissive of public life as theatre and television as its publicity agent.

Thus they refused to accept that ceremonial occasions were what Daniel Boorstin called "pseudo events" and the tormented Guy Debord, following in his wake, inflated into a full-blown theory of the spectacle as the commodification of experience by global capitalism—"the very heart of society's real unreality."[27] They acknowledged but begged to differ from the standard Left critique of public ceremony as "a theatre of power" enacted before but not for the masses[28]—a cynical distraction to blindside them to what was really going on. They took on board Benjamin's influential concept of fake aura—the aestheticization of politics through the spectacular mass event—but were not persuaded by it. There might be some truth in the perception of ceremonial occasions as forms of hegemonic control imposed from above on those below—and yet there was more to events than this, as they tried to show.

Dayan and Katz have separately rethought their work in light of recent history and continuing technological innovation. Both mourn the lost innocence of the original study in which media events were celebratory and its politics those of reconciliation rather than conflict. In a summary conclusion to a co-edited collection with Monroe Price on the Beijing Olympics, Dayan looks beyond media events and finds "disenchantment, derailment, disruption."[29] And in a retrospective look at media events Tamar Liebes and Katz find there is "No more peace."[30] Festive occasions have given way to disaster, war and terror. Both authors have been contemplating, as Dayan puts it, "whether there is a retreat from the genres of media events, as we described them, and an increase in the live broadcasting of disruptive events of disaster, terror and armed conflict."[31] The dominant live-to-air media event today is no longer a peaceful occasion but a disaster of some kind–whether natural (hurricane Katrina, the giant tsunami of South East Asia) or human (9/11 and subsequent terrorist attacks in Madrid, London, Mumbai and elsewhere). A new genre of live television broadcasting, what Liebes calls "the disaster marathon," has emerged in response to the fading of peace in the world at present and the return of terror and conflict.[32]

These historic changes in the world are linked to changing media technologies that accompany them. For Katz and Liebes,

> the new media ecology together with cynicism vis-à-vis establishments and media, have undermined the awe of ceremonial events and […] the new mobile technology plus the paranoia of our times have propelled major news of disaster from the classic "bulletin" of tragedy to extended coverage of the trauma itself, or what remains of it.[33]

For Dayan classic television (the television that speaks from the center) produces a focused attentiveness to an output simultaneously viewed by many millions and thus characterized by "sharedness"—the same shared access to events as defined and distributed by the center. The work of focusing collective attentions in the act of showing is what he means by the *monstrations* of television. But the "solid" media of the center are now surrounded by newer "liquid" digital media; the media at the margins, on the periphery, that are linked to each other in complex networks no longer constrained by ideas, interests, opinions and events generated and defined from political and cultural centers. If televisions of the center monstrate, he argues, peripheral media both *premonstrate* and *remonstrate* in a temporal dialectic of before and after.[34] Certain news stories, taken up by central media, first appear and circulate in the new digital counter-media. The notorious photographs by an American soldier of the abuse of prisoners in Abu Ghraib were taken on a cell phone, privately circulated and then put on-line. They were quickly picked up and shown on central media where they immediately created international outrage and gravely damaged the legitimacy of the American armed intervention in

Iraq.[35] Pre-monstration comes before the monstrations of televisions of the center. Re-monstration comes after them: a second showing that serves as a reproach and critique of the monstrations of the television of the center.[36] Such is a key function of the blogosphere, deployed with notable critical effect in the immediate aftermath of Katrina and its coverage by national media. Thus the center-periphery relationship is now redefined. Each has its own social and technical networks. Each is always on the look-out for what the other is up to. Either may be the primary source of breaking news. Central media's versions of events, constantly monitored on the internet, no longer go unchallenged. It is an agonistic rather than antagonistic relationship; one that is contested rather than conflicted, one of growing interdependence and interaction in which either may set the agenda and in which interpretations of events are subject to constant scrutiny and challenge.[37]

   Such is the world of the present and its politics, as mediated by dispersed televisions of the center around the world today. It remains for me briefly to indicate why I believe central television services will persist as crucial components of the world-historical character of life today and for the foreseeable future. The thought I wish to close with concerns not just television. It is to do with our understanding of any and all central social institutions-religious, political, military, sporting and cultural, as well as media institutions. The critical paradigm has thought of these one way or another in Althusserian terms—as either repressive or ideological state apparatuses. And maybe they are, though it seems to me that we live today in a post-ideological world—at least in the post-modern West if not in other parts of the world. For us—the peoples of North America and Europe—there are no longer any central value systems (mythical or otherwise) that central institutions work to maintain and superimpose on supine subject populations (the vanished "silent masses"). Dayan's global model of central media and their monstrations in play with counter-media and their premonstrations and remonstrations better describes our reality than the older model, based on nation-states with powerful centers that spoke and silent subject populations that listened. In today's endlessly talkative world, everyone speaks, everyone expresses themselves, everyone has opinions, everyone makes themselves heard through new social media constantly in play, in contestation, with central media. The critique of the agenda setting function of central media lacks the force it once had. *Is* there an agenda? Whose? And if there is some central agenda (but what, exactly?), is it not instantly challenged by a chorus of voices in the blogosphere? The real myth, in Couldry's argument, is that there *are* any central myths (or value systems) to be promoted by the centers of postmodern social life today. There is rather a plurality of noisily contested views of the world, in America and elsewhere—and this is the upshot of the uses and applications that people have found for the newest tele-technologies (cell phone and internet) that have taken their place in today's media galaxy alongside their parent technologies—the telephone, radio and television.

If the role of central media is no longer primarily ideological do they have any central role? I think they do, and it is a role that ideology critique covered over. The master concept in the critical paradigm is power. From Weber onwards the sociology of institutions has focused on them as economic, political and cultural power centers, and so of course they are. But that is not all they are. Nor is it necessarily the case that that is primarily what they are. As I conceive them their most basic *raison d'être* is to hold the world in place through the time of *longue durée*, that is, through deep historical time.[38] Central institutions are devices against death and the ruin of mortality. They are the necessary pre-conditions of any *complex* human existence—complex, in the sense of being able to endure over great spaces in the time of centuries and millennia. The management of time and space was the great theme of Harold Innis's late masterpiece, *Empire and communication*.[39] How could an extended world endure from generation to generation without differentiated central social institutions to hold them in place? As Innis famously argued in respect of Rome, the empire was maintained across centuries precisely by transport and communication systems that linked the imperial power center of the world (the *city* of Rome) to all its far flung military outposts. Empires come and go, but the institutions and infrastructure that hold the world in place endure through time. Their enduring power is independent of any power struggle over them in any particular place and time. They belong to no one. They are, and always have been (though seldom seen as such) the common resources of an evolving common, historical humanity. In the course of long historical time, world-creating, world-sustaining central societal institutions, transport and communications infrastructure have been slowly, imperceptibly modified, refined and (yes) improved to the point at which we have arrived now, at the start of the 21st century.

Today we are at a turning point in human history. Never before have human beings lived in a world in which, in principle, everyone everywhere has instant connectivity with everyone else. We all now know and understand that we live in a common world and share a common humanity. This does not mean, of course, that there is any agreement about what this means, still less that there is any central value system (or world myth, perhaps) to which we all sign up. What is emerging as today's global agenda is the immense problem of establishing robust and durable institutions, beyond the frame of nation-states, for the management of global politics and the world economy. At this point in time who can say how this will work out? But it is surely the name of the game for the coming century and beyond. Meanwhile, we do have, around the world, those dispersed televisions of the center that unobtrusively remind us (should we need it) on a daily basis that we live in a common world by endlessly monstrating it. That in itself seems a good enough reason to suppose that this kind of television will endure for the foreseeable future—in continuous remonstration with other media and other televisions in all parts of the world.

Notes

1 Lynn Spigel, *Make Room for Television* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992).
2 See Amanda Lotz, *The Television Will be Revolutionized* (New York: New York University Press, 2008) for an excellent historical account of the transition, in the United States, from network to post network television.
3 Stuart Hall, "Culture, the Media and the 'Ideological Effect,'" *Mass Communication and Society*, eds. J. Curran, M. Gurevitch and J. Woolacott (London: Edward Arnold, 1977), 315–48.
4 On the USA see Marybeth Haralovich "Suburban Family Sitcoms and Consumer Product Designs: Addressing the Social Subjectivity of Homemakers in the 1950s," *Television and its Audience*, eds. P. Drummond and R. Paterson (London: British Film Institute, 1988), 38–60. For the U.K., see Charlotte Brunsdon and David Morley, *Everyday Television: "Nationwide"* (London: British Film Institute, 1978).
5 Jeremy Tunstall, *The Media are American* (London: Constable, 1977).
6 Herbert Schiller, *Communication and Cultural Domination* (New York: International Arts and Sciences Press, 1976).
7 Ien Ang, *Watching Dallas: Soap Operas and the Melodramatic Imagination* (London: Methuen, 1985); Tamar Liebes and Elihu Katz, *The Export of Meaning. Cross-Cultural Readings of "Dallas"* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).
8 Jeremy Tunstall, *The Media Were American* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007).
9 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso Press, 1983).
10 David Morrison, "Cultural and Moral Authority: The Presumption of Television," *The End of Television? Its Impact on the World (So Far)*, eds. Elihu Katz and Paddy Scannell, *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 625 (2009): 116–28.
11 Daniel Dayan and Elihu Katz, *Media Events* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992).
12 Dayan and Katz, *Media Events*, 152.
13 Nick Couldry, *Media Rituals. A Critical Approach* (London: Routledge, 2003).
14 Couldry, *Media Rituals*, 56 (original emphasis).
15 Couldry, *Media Rituals*, 4.
16 Nick Couldry, "Television and the Myth of the Mediated Centre: Time for a Paradigm Shift in Media Studies?" Paper presented at *Media in Transition 3* Conference (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Boston: 2003).
17 Couldry, "Television and the Myth of the Mediated Centre," 4–5.
18 Couldry, "Television and the Myth of the Mediated Centre," 6.
19 Raymond Williams, *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* (London: Fontana, 1974), 27.
20 Paddy Scannell, "Technology and Utopia: British Radio in the 1920s," *Die idee des radios*, eds. E. Lersch and H. Schanze (Konstanz: UVK Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, 2004), 83–94.
21 Walter Benjamin, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," *Illuminations* (London: Fontana, 1973), 187. On the calendrical role of the BBC in British national life see David Cardiff and Paddy Scannell, "Broadcasting and National Unity," *Impacts and Influences,* eds. J. Curran, A. Smith and P. Wingate (London: Methuen, 1987), 157–73. Paddy Scannell and David Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting, 1922–1939* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 277–303.
22 Daniel Dayan, "Sharing and Showing: Television as Monstration," *The End of Television? Its Impact on the World (So Far)*, eds. Elihu Katz and Paddy Scannell, *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 625 (2009): 10–31.

23 Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001), 85–126.

24 Nick Couldry, Andreas Hepp and Friedrich Krotz (eds), *Media Events in a Global Age* (London: Routledge, 2010), 5. The quotation is from the introduction by Couldry and Hepp.

25 Dayan and Katz, *Media Events*, vii.

26 Kurt and Gladys Lang, "The Unique Perspective of Television and its Effect: A Pilot Study," *American Sociological Review* 23, no. 1 (February 1953): 3–12. For their critical response, see Elihu Katz and Daniel Dayan, "The Audience is a Crowd, the Crowd is a Public: Latter-Day Thoughts on Lang and Lang's 'MacArthur Day in Chicago,'" *Canonic Texts in Media Research*, eds. E. Katz, J.D. Peters, T. Liebes and A. Orloff (Cambridge: Polity Press), 121–36.

27 Daniel Boorstin, *The Image. Whatever Happened to the American Dream?* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1961); Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* (New York: Zone Books, 1995), 13.

28 Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: Polity Press), 8.

29 Daniel Dayan, "Beyond Media Events," *Owning the Olympics,* eds. M. Price and D. Dayan (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 391–402.

30 Elihu Katz and Tamar Liebes, "'No More Peace!' How Disaster, Terror and War Have Upstaged Media Events," *Media Events in a Global Age*, eds. N. Couldry, A. Hepp and F. Krotz (London, Routledge, 2010), 32–41. "No more peace!" is an ironic reference to Anwar el-Sadat's declaration of "No more war!" when he came to Jerusalem in November 1977 to make diplomatic peace with Israel.

31 Dayan, "Beyond Media Events," 393.

32 Tamar Liebes, "Television's Disaster Marathons: A Danger for Democratic Processes?" *Media, Ritual and Identity*, eds. J. Curran and T. Liebes (London: Routledge, 1998), 71–84.

33 Katz and Liebes "'No More Peace!'" 39.

34 Note that televisions of the center are a plurality. There is no singular world center today or any television that speaks from or for it. But there are services that are not produced for national audiences and that address the whole world. These mega-television networks, as Dayan calls them (he mentions Al Jazeera, BBC World, TV5 Monde and CNN International) speak from national and/or regional centers but aim at constituencies much larger than nations. They do not present themselves as the mouthpieces of the nation-states in which they are based and are in no way contemporary equivalents of Voice of America, organs of national self-promotion and propaganda. They tend to identify themselves, Dayan observes, in terms of the city from which they speak. In the USA, a 60-minute world news program is presented each weekday morning on NPR by the BBC World Service. It introduces itself as speaking "from London," not Britain. Today's world centers are cities, not countries. Not for nothing was the World Trade Center built in Manhattan.

35 Philip Gourevitch and Errol Morris, "Annals of War: Exposure—The Woman Behind the Camera at Abu Ghraib," *The New Yorker* (March 21, 2008): 45–53.

36 Dayan, "Sharing and Showing: Television as Monstration."

37 Stephen Coleman, Michael Gurevitch and Jay Blumler, "Political Communication—Old and New Relationships," *The End of Television? Its Impact on the World (So Far),* eds. E. Katz and P. Scannell. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 625 (2009): 164–81

38 Fernand Braudel, "History and the Social Sciences: The *Longue Durée*," *On History* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980), 25–54.

39 Harold Innis, *Empire and Communication* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950).

Towards a vertical hermeneutics of the modern

On modernness

Tarik Sabry

> We have no idea what being modern means. But we are sure that it guarantees us a future.[1]
>
> (John Gray)

> Modernity is often defined in terms of humanism, either as a way of saluting the birth of "man" or as a way of announcing his death. But this habit itself is modern, because it remains asymmetrical. It overlooks the simultaneous birth of "nonhumanity"—things, or objects, or beasts—and the equally strange beginning of a crossed-out God, relegated to the sidelines. Modernity arises first from the conjoined creation of those three entities, and then from the masking of the conjoined birth and the separate treatment of the three communities while, underneath, hybrids continue to multiply as an effect of this separate treatment.[2]
>
> (Bruno Latour)

Introduction

Making a diversion by way of philosophy, this chapter makes use of work by Bruno Latour to articulate three key problems/deficits in our thinking about the category "modern" and asks how these may influence/inform the ways in which we think about the relationship between media, culture and society in a globalized world. The first problematic is inherent to the structure of the "modern constitution" *per se*, as described by Latour in *We Have Never Been Modern* (see the extract above). Here I rehearse what media and communication studies can learn from what Latour calls the modern constitution's ontological problem, the "double separation" and "the vertical proliferation of quasi-objects/ hybrids." The second problematic engages with the epistemic deficit in articulations of the modern in "academic language" and enunciates, making use of Heidegger's method, a non-assuming thinking on and about the category "modern" as it discloses itself to us in time and space. To do this, I introduce and grapple with the concept "modernness" as a new category and an attempt to re-describe "modern." The third problematic lies in the *a priori* "zombie" hermeneutics, to borrow Beck's terminology, with which the modern

is automatically associated and explained, what Paul Ricoeur calls the "hermeneutics of suspicion," which makes it impossible for us to think about "modernity" and its institutions outside the theses of alienation and reification. While recent human history—that of industrialization, the routinization of social everyday life, globalization, colonialism and imperialism, to be precise— vindicates the hermeneutics of suspicion, it has, in the meantime, limited what can be said about socio-cultural/existential phenomena to a critique and a language—that of *reification*—that has ironically achieved a status of imma- nence, perhaps a metaphysical immanence, unwittingly alienating other possi- ble hermeneutics. Those who dare think outside, or who transcend such immanence, are accused of being either indifferent bourgeois or postmodern *veriphobes*.

This essay enunciates a dual hermeneutic-take where hermeneutics of trust/ hope are given a chance, not as intellectual immanence, but rather as a tactical default position for re-thinking the category "modern." The questions I pro- pose—and which I do not attempt to answer here, as I see this as part of a process, that of a reflexive modernity rather than a conclusion—are the fol- lowing: How can we objectify the vertical hybridization that is taking place within the constitution of the modern and then, as a second task, relate our objectification to our study of relationships between media, culture and society in a globalized world? How does public service broadcasting articulate/ communicate "existential"/"religious" within the boundaries and the separa- tions of the modern constitution enunciated by Latour? How do we connect the category "modernness" to the empirical world? How can modernness (or the ontologizing of the "modern") and a hermeneutics of trust, as a default posi- tion, help us re-think the "care-structures" of the media?[3] What follows is an attempt towards the concretizing of such questions, perhaps clarifying them and most importantly, making sure that they are worth posing, articulating and therefore pursuing.

We have never been modern!

No critical work exposes the ontological deficit of "the modern constitution" with the same clarity and systematicity as Latour's 1993 publication *We Have Never Been Modern*. The focus in this short yet seminal work is not on *dis- enchantment* or *dialectics of enlightenment*, nor does it focus on the *incom- pleteness* of modernity as a project. Instead, in this work, Latour follows what I think is an even more devastating argument, as he questions and throws into doubt the very premise of the "modern" as an historical category. This is based on a controversial, yet rather convincing, line of thinking: since the modern constitution is based, fundamentally, on constitutional and discursive double separations between human/nonhuman; society/nature; God/state, and also since these separations have never been clear-cut or total; we therefore cannot affirm that we have ever been fully modern or, for that matter, much

different from the pre-moderns. What has happened (or has been happening), observes Latour, is that these separations have been used tactically by the "moderns" in an intentional/conscious oscillation between "transcendence" and "immanence" without achieving total and final separation. Yet in so doing, argues Latour, quasi-objects/hybrids have been proliferating and multiplying in-between (vertically), and these objects have been unaccounted for/ repressed to the detriment of the modern constitution and its coherence as a project. Latour champions a rethinking, a re-description of the "modern constitution" in a way that takes into account the proliferation of hybrids and quasi-objects, so that they too become visible and historical. Latour describes, below, how the symmetrical structure of the modern constitution and its tactical dynamics of immanence and transcendence unravel:

> A threefold transcendence and a threefold immanence in a crisscrossed schema that locks in all the possibilities: This is where I locate the power of the moderns. They have not made Nature; they make society; they make nature; they have not made Society; they have not made either; God has made everything; God has made nothing, they have made everything. There is no way we can understand the moderns if we do not see that the four guarantees serve as checks and balances for one another. The first two make it possible to alternate the sources of power by moving directly from pure natural force to pure political force, and vice versa. The third guarantee rules out any contamination between what belongs to nature and what belongs to politics, even though the first two guarantees allow a rapid alternation between the two. Might the contradiction between the third, which separates, and the first two, which alternate, be too obvious? No, because the fourth constitutional guarantee establishes as arbiter an infinitely remote God who is simultaneously totally impotent and the sovereign judge … the modern constitution allows the expanded proliferation of hybrids whose existence, whose very possibility, it denies. By playing three times in a row on the same alternation between transcendence and immanence, the modern can mobilize Nature, objectify the social, and feel the spiritual presence of God, even while firmly maintaining that Nature escapes us, that society is our own work, and that God no longer intervenes.[4]

The double play that characterizes the invincibility of the modern constitution – that is, its intentional oscillation between immanence and transcendence, separating and cancelling out the very same separation between the three regions of being – has allowed the moderns, contends Latour, "to do anything – and its opposite."[5]

However, in outlining the symmetrical space of the modern constitution and in re-establishing "the common understanding that organizes the separation of natural and political powers," Latour rather provocatively argues, "we cease

to be modern."[6] The "moderns," advances Latour, have always used this double dimension in practice (by which he means both the horizontal and the vertical), but although "they have always been explicit about each of them," he says, "they have never been explicit about the relation between the two sets of practices." He suggests that by "deploying both dimensions at once" [the horizontal and the vertical], "we may be able to accommodate the hybrids and give them a place, a name, a home, a philosophy, an ontology and … a new constitution."[7] Latour does not deny the effectiveness of the ontological separation. In fact, he shows how it is "discursive" and part of a system of checks and balances. In other words, the constitution is not un-intentional or part of an illusion, nor is it the product of a false consciousness. Latour's work is symbolic of what Ulrich Beck, Lash and Giddens,[8] see as part of a "reflexive modernization" or, to quote Beck, that kind of modernity "that has begun to modernize its own foundations … to the extent that it disenchants and dissolves its own taken-for-granted premises."[9] However, rather than claiming that we have never been modern, I prefer to argue with Fredric Jameson[10] and others that the modern/modernity is a narrative category/a discursive formation and that in not living up to the kind of purification or ontological distinction that Latour exposes, we do not stop being modern; we simply become modern in different ways. But I am certainly with/for Latour in that, to do this, the "modern constitution" needs to acknowledge its ontological hybridities, their proliferation and to deal with them as constitutive parts of the whole. This is, in principle, what Latour is trying to achieve. This, in turn, invites the following question, perhaps one for media scholars and students alike, how do we go about studying the proliferation of hybrids (within the modern constitution) in a way that conjoins the ontological distinction problematic, as a radical reflexivity with the ways in which the latter has historically been communicated by the media?

Towards a vertical/hybrid hermeneutics of the modern

For the purpose of this chapter, I will focus on the separation between religion and society/state, a tactical ontological distinction best encapsulated by Latour:

> You cannot even accuse them of being nonbelievers. If you tell them they are atheists, they will speak to you of an all-powerful God who is infinitely remote in the great beyond. If you say that this crossed-out God is something of a foreigner, they will tell you that he speaks in the privacy of the heart, and that despite their sciences and their politics, they have never stopped being moral and devout. If you express astonishment at a religion that has no influence either on the way the world goes or on the direction of society, they will tell you that it sits in judgment on both. If you ask to read those judgments, they will object that religion infinitely surpasses

science and politics and it does not influence them, or that religion is a social construct, or the effect of neurons![11]

Latour's take on the question of "religion" and "belief" within the modern constitution is reasserted, perhaps more radically by John Gray's critique of the Enlightenment and its philosophers, those he accuses of having "given up an irrational belief in God for an irrational faith in mankind."[12] Since the modern constitution forbids the mixing, let us say, of God and the State, or Nature and Society, the proliferation of the quasi-objects—what goes on in-between/vertically—is repressed. However, such repression does not end their multiplication, proliferation or, indeed, their hybridization. Nature and society are, as the recent ecological crises have made clear, so intertwined, which exposes the Weberian pre-supposition that all the side effects of industrialization and rationalization are predictable and, therefore, controllable – a tactical presupposition that the modern constitution relied upon to manage its double separation between nature and society.

The same could be said about the social fabric of, let us say, postcolonial France and other European societies and their socio-cultural transformative aspects, which now more than ever and because of migration, expose and trouble the separation between God and the politics of secularism. To reiterate, the point from this discourse is not to argue with Latour that "we have never been modern;" but to enunciate the different ways that can help us understand how such hybrids operate at the level of symbolic mediation. To be more precise, one might ask: how does such a separation affect media policy vis à vis religious broadcasting? How does the separation between society and the existential and the vertical proliferation of objects that are caused by such a separation affect the structures of public broadcasting in European multicultural/pluralistic societies? How can the modern constitution retain its functionality in a globalized mass mediated world where the pre-modern, the modern and post-modern are on display for us in the same spatiality?

The fact that our default position for thinking about media, culture and society in western academe (and which has a lot to do with its intellectual formations and the historical moments to which they were responding) privileges the social and the political, leaving out/cancelling/repressing the *existential*, which precedes both categories and indeed determines them, is good evidence of the workings of the ontological distinction explained by Latour. Articulations of media, culture and society in western academe are a product of the modern constitution and its functional dynamics of immanence and transcendence. Habermas, a Weberian *par excellence*, has since the events of 9/11 had a change of heart about the role of religion in rational discourse, acknowledging its place in polity, episteme and social life (though he does not explain how religious discourse can be rationalized for it to be part of a liberal rational public sphere). As he put it:

postmetaphysical thinking misunderstands itself if it fails to include the religious traditions alongside metaphysics in its own genealogy. On these premises, it would be irrational to reject those "strong" traditions as "archaic" residua instead of elucidating their internal connection with modern forms of thought. Even today, religious traditions perform the function of articulating awareness of what is lacking or absent. They keep alive a sensitivity to failure and suffering. They rescue from oblivion the dimensions of our social and personal relations in which advances in cultural and social rationalization have caused utter devastation. Who is to say they do not contain encoded semantic potentialities that could provide inspiration if only their message were translated into rational discourse and their profane truth contents were set free?[13]

Does Emmanuel Levinas[14] cease to be "modern" at the point where he asserts that morality is not only part of philosophy, but also the first philosophy? Or does he, instead, enunciate a different way of being "modern," a reflexive/ radical modernity that does not conform to, or endorse, the modern constitution's ontological distinction? If culture is, as we learn from Geertz,[15] that web of symbolic meaning that man weaves, and if religion and the existential are part of this narrative weaving, then obliterating it not only hampers our understanding of cultural experience, but also limits what can be said outside the social and political. What Latour's work does, and here we can also add Habermas's intervention/corrective,[16] is to invite us to consider, as an intellectual task, the re-working, re-describing and perhaps radicalizing of the modern constitution/rational public sphere by considering, and taking seriously, what goes on in-between (in the case of Habermas faith), and that means the acceptance, study and exploration of the proliferating and hybrid quasi-objects, which seem to have stretched the poles of the constitution. In so doing we expose a myriad of horizontally positioned quasi-objects, left out, unexplained. But what should be of concern here, again for the media scholar, is not merely the philosophical positioning of such a separation or, in the case of Habermas, an invitation to reconsider the role of the *existential*, but thinking through, in more practical/empirical terms, how such separations/re-connections are and can be built into broadcasting cultures in the West.

Reconciling republicanism and liberalism

I cannot think of a better or more current example to illustrate the workings of the ontological distinction between God/the existential and society than the French headscarf affair of the late 1980s. This involved the act of three French girls who, defying France's official religion, *Laïcité*, arrived at school wearing the Islamic headscarf. This was a symbolic moment that triggered a serious debate, not only in France, but also in much of Europe. It challenged notions of liberalism, secularism and citizenship that had hitherto been thought of

as unproblematic. What has made such a moment even more complex, especially for those who hold on to an essentialist/static view of European identity, is that some of the European women wearing the headscarves have coherently and *discursively* argued, reconciling liberalism and republicanism, that their act is expressive not only of an asserted individual identity (one of religiosity or being French Muslims), but also of the democratic exercise of the rights to freedom and tolerance inherent to the liberal French and European democratic tradition. The French parliament reacted by passing a 2003 law banning all religious symbols in schools.

As religious identity moved towards a communitarian identity or, as I like to call it, identity of the ghetto (which is well exemplified by the case of Parisian *banlieues*), the question of citizenship under the banner of *Laïcité* becomes very problematic. This is one example of the proliferation of hybrids (a hybrid whose visibility was brought to life by a symbolic act of defiance). Although treatment of "the headscarf situation" was handled differently by different European states, what is clear is that such a quasi-object can no longer be confined to the realm of the private; nor can it be easily repressed or eliminated, for it has not only entered the public realm (including media), but it has also triggered serious intellectual debate, resulting in a call for a re-conceptualization of secularism from a neutral and static category that is based on a politics of sameness to a coherent argument for an evolutionary form of secularism that incorporates and respects difference.[17]

Migration has transformed European ideas of heimat/identity/sense of place, and that is whether Europe and Europeans like it or not. Notwithstanding the vast compendium of research and new theoretical debates which responded to consequences of migration in Europe, much of which challenged the "coherence" of the main premises on which Western liberal democracies have been erected (nationalism, secularism, liberalism and the public sphere as opposed to "public sphericules"), little has been done in terms of instituting a conscious re-articulation/radicalization of "otherness" as ethics, without which, I argue, the poles in the ontological distinction exposed by Latour can only widen. While Habermas was right to point out that the "fusing of citizenship and national culture leads to a 'monochrome' interpretation of civil rights that is insensitive to cultural differences,"[18] his attempt to reconcile republicanism with liberalism falls short as his radicalizing is tactically tucked in under or rather contained within "universal" values of Western liberalism. As he put it:

> These problems can be solved in principle only from a universalistic egalitarian perspective that detaches the mobilization of civic solidarity from ethnic nationality and radicalized it into a solidarity between "others."[19]

A radical ethics of otherness does not have to conform to any immanent discourse of religiosity for it to be "ethical." The focus here is on "otherness" as a heuristic and necessary ethical modality, a kind of precursor to a more universally inclusive and non-immanent way of thinking about others or/and their

cultures, ideas, languages and histories. Knowledge, in this case, would be described as "the relation of man to exteriority, the relation of the same to the Other, in which the other finally finds itself stripped of its alterity, in which it becomes interior to my, in which transcendence makes itself immanence."[20] An ethical modernity does not have to be baptized for it to be ethical, but it cannot, however, reject religiosity or religion (no matter what religion it is) from its logo-sphere. An ethical modernity should not take as its role the need to preach "otherness" and the kind of ethical disinterestedness that comes with it beyond what it already is—a fore-given ethical category, that of "care." I am, and everyone else is, always and everywhere, the "other" since I am; and, we are always, the other's other.

Levinas's repositioning of "subjectivity" in Western thought/plane, one where our relation to the other becomes the basis for our "subjectivity," is fundamental not only to the historicization of the proliferating hybrids described by Latour, but also to an ethical rationality and modernity.

By otherness, I am here referring to respect and engagement with all forms of *othering*: religious, opinion, racial, gender, class, linguistic and intellectual. That is always making sure that our relation to exteriority is one of "radical disin-terestedness" and respect, no matter how different the other is. A radical ethics of "otherness" is a precursor not only to an ethical society, but also to an ethical rationality and an ethical modernity. It is, as Polyani and Prosch put it, "almost axiomatic that the distinction between a free and totalitarian society lies exactly at this point: a free society is regarded as one that does *not* engage, on principle, in attempting to control what people find meaningful, and a totalitarian society is regarded as one that does, on principle, attempt such control."[21] Instituting a radical ethics of otherness/difference/exteriority where the purpose of objectification is not one of mere reciprocity, but one of "radical exteriority," of "disinterestedness," otherness-as-care, an otherness "for-the-other," and a way of "being otherwise," has to be fought for as an intellectual and a political project. For without such a coherent ethical project, the future in Europe may only bring with it cosmetic changes, which won't take long for their ugliness to re-surface. No ethical modernity is possible without instituting and the institutionalization of a radical ethics of otherness. Levinas's radical repo-sitioning of subjectivity in Western thought is repressed because his philosophy falls in-between and is a victim of the double separation and the ontological deficit described by Latour. Yet, it is Levinas's radical philosophy, his attempt to disengage subjectivity from its essence,[22] which holds the key to a democratic, ethical and pluralistic European public sphere, one where the proliferating hybrids are historicized as a necessary constituent of the modern constitution.

Modernness *(that kind of being in the world which we call modern)*

Latour's dissection of the modern constitution and its ontological deficit do not, however, make the category "modern" more graspable. And it is

important to add here that had it not been for lack of space, an articulation of the ontological distinction between nature and society would have undoubtedly, if probed, opened space for related argumentations. For the questions concerning God and humans/nature and society and how these are radicalized certainly form part of a coherent and conjunctional argument—that of a radical-ethical-rational-modernity. Is the concept "modern" ungraspable simply because, as the young Pascal put it, "Man transcends Man" or is it because of some inherent and yet to be thought of methodological deficit? The most thought-provoking thing about thinking "modern" is that we have yet to really think it outside Cartesian inner logics, the kind of *res cogitans* emanating from *les philosophes* of the Enlightenment who sought to rationalize and routinize everyday social life, the moderns who excelled themselves in the art of ontological separations, and the post-moderns or late moderns who took it upon themselves to expose the discursive formations and forms of knowledge of those who preceded them. All three intellectual formations have, however, failed to articulate "modern" in a discourse that bridges the gap between meaning and being. And so the same ontological problematic still stands. Could a new kind of thinking about "modern" that does away with academic language, one that thinks modern, to use Parmenides, as that which *is*?[23] Or are the shackles of history so great that "modern" can never be thought outside hermeneutics of *suspicion*? But how else can we think the beingness of modern radically, as that which *is*, as an ontological category: as a way of being in the world without being clouded by history or other *a priori* knowledge?

What I am arguing for here is not a de-historicization of "modern" nor am I interested in mythologizing this category in a Barthesian sense. Rather, I am arguing for a double-critique/a double-hermeneutics of modern which can allow us to think even momentarily *outside* the dominant hermeneutics of "modern": That is modern as a kind of *fallnness*.[24] Paul Ricoeur distinguishes between two types of hermeneutics: the "hermeneutics of trust" and the "hermeneutics of suspicion." Looking at the kind of discourse through which the category "modern" has been articulated by developmentalists, positivists and *veriphobes,* be it in anthropology, sociology, communication studies, cultural studies or media studies, I think it is safe to deduce that the concept "modern" has, in the main, been thought within what has been called the *hermeneutics* of suspicion, that is if we, of course, exclude the mercenaries of the free market who marketed the modern as a developmentalist and ideological project. Even Heidegger, who teaches us that our thinking about the world should not be clouded by academic language or any pre-existing, unassuming metaphysics, does exactly that in his thinking about the "modern," as a kind of *fallnness*. His work on technology[25] is clear evidence of a suspicious hermeneutics, or a hermeneutics of suspicion, about that kind of *being* in the world we call "modern."

The point from this discourse is that it is perhaps important to remind the reader not to discredit a *hermeneutics* of suspicion or the well-rehearsed and

historically based critique that falls under the rubric of disenchantment, alienation, or the "dialectic of enlightenment." Instead, the objective is to enunciate a new language: a re-description of the concept modern, a kind of language that takes a "hermeneutics of trust/hope" as a kind of default position and as a form of a new *beginning*. It is also an attempt at questioning and critiquing the dominant Cartesian and non-evidentiary method which has thus far dominated our understanding of modern. Here I extend my discussion on the category "modern" beyond Latour's critique, through a tactical re-description I term *modernness*[26] and rehearse whether such a semantic shift can bring with it an alternative method for understanding "being modern."

The vertical hermeneutics of the modern called for by Latour necessitates an *a priori* intellectual task – ontologizing modern as a category. The proliferating hybrids that Latour is at pains to historicize *are*. They are part of the modern constitution, but their historicization/radicalization, once they are allowed to speak discursively/performatively, will depend not only on a politics of inclusion or radical ethics of otherness, but also on the new meanings they give to their modernness (their being modern differently in the world) and therefore to the western modern constitution. That is when the radical project will begin to take shape. And this, it is important to add, is a project for philosophy, anthropology, media studies and cultural studies. A philosophy of modernness cannot proceed or rely solely on inner Cartesian logic. Instead, it has to come down to everyday life. As Lefebvre notes:

> […] the philosophical life is considered superior to everyday life, but when it attempts to solve the riddles of reality it only succeeds in proving the unreality, which is, indeed, implicit in its nature. It requires a realism it cannot achieve and aspires to transcend itself qua philosophical reality. The philosopher who sees himself qua philosopher as complete wisdom is living in the world of the imagination, and his weakness becomes evident when he tries to achieve what is humanly possible through his philosophy. Philosophy is self-contradictory and self-destructive when it claims its independence from the non-philosophical, and that it could entirely be self-sufficient.[27]

Talking about modernness rather than modern is an attempt to make sense of the kind of *being* modern *is*. It is an invitation to think modern in a phenomenological/anthropological way. Since *being modern* and modernity are a matter of concern for "*dasein*," an entity that is able to make an issue out of being in the world,[28] shouldn't *dasein*'s state of "modernness' or its being-modern-in-the world also be part of an ontological/phenomenological enquiry? Can we give "modernness"/"being modern" an ontological interpretation? Objectifying "modernness," as an ontic/ phenomenological category, I argue, is a way to bring meaning and being together. It is a way of reconciling modernity, as semantics/discourse/constitution with modernity, as an ontological

category and a lived experience. "Modernness," though related to modernity and "modernization," is a distinct and different category. Linguistically, when we talk about "modern" we are dealing with an *utterance*, a signifier that has no relation to the signified—the essence of *being* modern. Their relationship is one of arbitrariness. Dealing with "modernness' is an attempt to reconcile the signifier and the signified (semantics and being) in a more meaningful way. Whereas "modern" is only an arbitrary description of the state of *being* called "modern," modernness is about thinking through and reflecting on the very kind of *being*—of that "thing" we call "modern."

Grasping "modern" through conceptualized knowledge alone, I argue, is inadequate and an empirical approach to the study of "being modern" is necessary. It is through the ontologizing of the "modern" as a phenomenon and a reality, I argue, that meanings of modernity and modernization become clearer to us. "What makes it ontologically possible for entities to be encountered within-the-world and objectified as so encountered?" asks Heidegger in *Being and Time*.[29] Heidegger's use of the word "entities' remains rather vague – they are existential phenomena that are "present" in the world, but the question he asks remains so important: How do we objectify *modernness* as a kind of encounter, as something that is, a *res extensa* as opposed to a *res cogitans*? Modernness here, and unlike Heidegger's take on the "modern," does not presuppose any sort of *fallnness*, for this would limit not only the structures around which the concept is posited but also the different ontic/anthropological meanings it can acquire. To further clarify what modernness is, it is necessary to distinguish between, let us say, modernity, modernization, modernism and *modernness*. Modernity is a philosophical concept that finds its origins in the Enlightenment as a particular paradigm about a particular narrative of happiness.

This paradigm can be broken down into an ensemble of ideas and events, including, individuality, "the coming into history" of subjects whose fate had hitherto been decided by despotic and theocratic institutions, secularization, scientific endeavor, reason, man's domination over nature and its resources, freedom of opinion, the coming of the state and the role of intellectuals, not to mention the specialization of fields of knowledge and the energy attributed to capitalism as a mode of production and a determinant of a new set of socio-cultural relations. Modernity's pathologies and inconsistencies, best articulated by Weber and later Adorno and Horkheimer, have instead led to a "disenchanted" world, to use Weber's term, an "iron-cage" that led to the reification and *thingification* of human experience. The unraveling "*dialectics* of the enlightenment" repositioned thinking about modernity and "subjective-centred reason"[30] and turned modernity into an object of doubt and "an expression of 'sociological helplessness'."[31] The concept "modern" is equally contradictory and illusive. As Lefebvre observed in his *Introduction to Modernity*:

> When we utter the words "modern times", "modern psychology", "modern art", we think we have used terms and expressions, which mean

something, whereas in fact we have said nothing at all. We have merely pointed out an inextricable confusion between fashion, the here-and-now, the "valid", the lasting and the contemporary. In the midst of such confusion, the word has changed meaning several times over. In the way it is used at present it does not refer explicitly to anything definite or meaningful. Yet one or other of its meanings will always dominate, and in a curiously unconscious way it will penetrate our consciousnesses.[32]

"Modernization" is a *process* and must not be confused with modernity. It is a technical term introduced only in the 1950s.[33] "Modernism" is equally elusive and means quite different things to the Anglo-Saxon world than to the French, German or Spanish.[34] In the Anglo-Saxon world, modernism is conventionally used to describe "a variety of tendencies within the European and especially Anglo-American literature of the early twentieth century." In visual arts, the term is used to describe "the process of abstraction associated with cubism" as well as other variations of the avant-garde.[35] When articulating the concepts "modern" and "modernism," Lefebvre stresses the difference between "immediate consciousness" and knowledge, and "between representation and concept."[36] "Modernism" for Lefebvre is an incoherent, self-glorifying, triumphalist and *structureless* concept that confuses newness and creativity – "a bran tub of exaggerations, justifications, illusions and mystification, where ideologies, myths and utopianism are jumbled pell-mell."[37] "Modern," "modernity," "modernism" and "modernization" are intricate and desperately difficult concepts to define. Describing modernism as a constructed metaphor, Lefebvre observes:

> Modernism is determined to impose itself, either without discussion or by being deliberately controversial. It presents its two-fold credentials: novelty, imminent access to classicism. Propaganda for modernism is projected in metaphoric form in newspaper articles and radio and television programmes, and its aim is to intimidate. Anyone who does not accept it and dares to challenge it is made to feel and appear old-fashioned, out of date and not "with it" … The actual "creative" struggle is irrelevant, it is being seen at first nights that counts … [38]

In their effort to "structure historical becoming," intellectuals have integrated the concepts "modern" into such different discourses and thought systems that none, despite some effect, has proved realizable at the level of consciousness. This is not to say, however, that the proposed category "modernness" as a concept and a state of being is or can be illusion free. *Modernness* may be an attempt to deal with "modern" ontologically, but it is certainly not immune from ontological illusion or the cultural terrorism that comes with it. That is to say, even the most spontaneous self-reflexive narrative can be part of an elusive discourse. It is also difficult and problematic to make sense of

modernness as a temporal phenomenon because of its temporal multi-dimensionality. Meanings attributed to *modernness* (just as those attributed to "modern") may thus vary and mean different things in different times or stages of *being*. To *be modern* is, we may also add, to have ontological awareness of "modernness," or what it means to be modern in the world. Modernity, modernization and *modernness* are different interpretive frames that yield a different kind of hermeneutics and thus require different methodologies. Attempts to grasp the state-of-mindedness that we call "modern" have so far been articulated in relation to the institutional, the self-reflexive, "mobility," the arts, and through a study of institutionalized, anti-anxiety mechanisms for coping with the modern condition,[39] but so far this task has been performed, with few exceptions of research conducted in the developing world, in theoretical and non-evidential terms, ignoring the anthropological dimensions of what it means to be "modern" as well as the intentional and discursive techniques used by the media to articulate modernness. *Modernness*, it must be added, is not simply of concern to the intellectual or philosopher; it is also a matter of concern for ordinary persons, whose *being* is too woven into the institutional and ontological aspects of modernity, including media. Also, if enquiry into *dasein*'s being is best examined through structures of the everyday, then modernness, which is a matter of concern for *dasein*, must also be studied and grounded in everyday structures of being in the world and how these are self-reflexively articulated by the modern subject as well as the modern institution par excellence – the media.

Conclusion

The semantic shift from modern to modernness is driven by a methodological *telos*. It is an attempt to articulate "modern" empirically in ways that broaden its hermeneutics beyond Cartesian articulations embedded in the "universal" liberal values once articulated by *les philosophes* of the Enlightenment. It is also an attempt to accommodate hybridized articulations and forms of being modern that now stand at the periphery of the modern constitution. The historicization of the repressed, multiplying hybrids, giving them an ontology, a history and an institution depends on this ontological, self-reflexive exercise, allowing the other to express her modernness within the kind of radical exteriority proposed by Levinas. Most important, and for it to succeed, the operationalization of this "radical democracy" also depends on its institutionalization. Since modernity/late modernity, as a self-reflexive project, is inextricably linked to its media, a vertical hermeneutics of the modern will equally depend for its mechanization on a vertical mediation of the modern and by which I mean the kind of mediation that challenges and subverts the intentional separations inherent to the modern constitution. As such, the role of the media, as a pluralistic public sphere, is fundamental. Commercial media are, as we learn from well-rehearsed argumentations and lessons of political

economy, more than likely to be oblivious to such a project. The historiciza-
tion of the proliferating hybrids (allowing the repressed within the modern
constitution to speak and to be accounted for) will, therefore, depend largely
at the micro level on a) the roles of diasporic/communitarian media and at a
macro level on b) the European tradition of public service broadcasting. The
commercialization of the public sphere, therefore, stands as a serious deterrent
to such a project—that of a radical-ethical-rational-modernity.

Notes

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 2 Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University
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 3 Paddy Scannell in Tarik Sabry, "An Interview With Professor Paddy Scannell,"
   Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture 4, no. 2 (2007).
 4 Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 34.
 5 Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 39.
 6 Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 13.
 7 Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 51.
 8 Ulrich Beck, Anthony Giddens and Scott Lash, *Reflexive Modernization: Politics,
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   2004), 29.
10 Fredric Jameson, *A Singular Modernity: Essay on the Ontology of the Present*
   (London: Verso, 2002).
11 Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 39.
12 Gray, *Straw Dogs*, 38.
13 Jürgen Habermas, *Between Naturalism and Religion* (Cambridge: Polity, 2008), 6.
14 Emmanuel Levinas, *Existence and Existents* (London: Kluwer Academic Publishers,
   1978).
15 Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (London: Fontana Press, 1973).
16 Habermas, *Between Naturalism and Religion*.
17 See Tariq Modood, Anna Triandafyllidou, and Ricard Zapata-Barrero, eds.,
   Multiculturalism, Muslims and Citizenship: A European Approach (London:
   Routledge, 2006); Habermas, *Between Naturalism and Religion*.
18 Habermas, *Between Naturalism and Religion,* 273.
19 Ibid.
20 Emmanuel Levinas, *On the Thinking-of-the-Other: Entre Nous* (New York:
   Columbia University Press, [1991] 1998), 180.
21 Michael Polanyi and Harry Prosch, *Meaning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press,
   1975), 182.
22 Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence* (London: Martinus
   Nijhoff Publishers. 1981), 9.
23 See Martin Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?* (New York: Harper &
   Row, 1968).
24 Heidegger's concept of *fallnness* is embedded in a particular metaphysics of the
   Christian faith, where it is believed that humans have come into the world as sinners,
   thus Adam and Eve's fall from paradise to earth. Here I use the term "fallnness" in
   a symbolic way to signify alienation, reification and disenchantment.

25 Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1977).
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27 Henri Lefebvre, *Everyday Life in the Modern World* (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, [1984], 1999), 13–14.
28 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1962), 231.
29 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 417.
30 Martin Heidegger in Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1987), 13.
31 Beck in Graham Murdock, "Communications and the Constitution of Modernity," *Media, Culture and Society* 15 (1993): 521.
32 Henri Lefebvre, *Introduction to Modernity* (London: Verso, 1995), 185.
33 Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, 2.
34 David Macey, *Dictionary of Critical Theory* (London: Penguin Books, 2000), 257.
35 Macey, *Dictionary of Critical Theory*, 258.
36 Lefebvre, *Introduction to Modernity*, 187.
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39 Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991).

Part IV

Destabilizing orders

Resistance and social transformation

Resistance

From old to new media

Sara Mourad

In *The Human Condition*, Hannah Arendt discusses the boundlessness of human action. She writes, "The limitations of the law are never entirely reliable safeguards against action from within the body politic, just as the boundaries of the territory are never entirely reliable safeguards against action from without."[1] Borders are constantly erected and monitored to limit social, cultural, and political action. Before resorting to physical repression, states engage in a pre-emptive exercise of boundary-drawing whereby they place certain spaces, the sacred and the potentially threatening, out of the reach of citizens. The following chapters by Murphy and Yang discuss how citizens use media to deliberately resist hegemonic orders and transgress such imposed borders.

Just as the ruling Chinese dynasties first ordered the erection of the Great Wall to protect the empire from invasions and intrusions by foreign nomadic groups, Guobin Yang explains how the Chinese government created the "Great Firewall" (officially called the Golden Shield Project), an elaborate system of internet control that separates Chinese cyberspace from the outside. In his chapter, Yang takes up the task of explaining how and why this Firewall was erected, and how Chinese political activists are constantly scaling and crossing it. Studying the use of Twitter in China, Yang analyzes the simultaneous efforts by the Chinese state and activists to respectively draw and transgress borders. Explaining how activists made use of favorable global forces and international media exposure to advance their struggle against the Chinese state, Yang shows how global media have become a powerful player even in local struggles.

Although the state has been overemphasized as the target of political activism, Murphy shows that resistance does not exclusively pit citizens against their nation-states. The state-sponsored green media project in Ecuador is a case in point, where civil society and the state joined forces, through local media, to resist a global neo-liberal system that is destroying the planet and exploiting its resources. The alliance had shifted: while citizens seek the help of international actors against the state in China, citizens join forces with the state in Ecuador in their fight against global economic forces. In both

scenarios, activists articulate demands which are increasingly global in scope—in a local discourse, sometimes seeking answers and inspiration in the past. In Ecuador, ancient Andean cosmology and its philosophy of living in harmony with nature guided the drafting of the new "green" constitution. At a time when "going green" has become a global commodity to be consumed with our environmentally conscious Starbucks paper cups, Ecuador re-framed the relationship between people and Earth through a local discourse inspired by Andean tradition.

In addition to blurring the boundaries between the local and the global spheres of action, new forms of mediated resistance—in China, Bolivia, Ecuador, and elsewhere—destabilize boundaries between old and new media. Following recent uprisings in the Middle East, pundits have placed "new media" at the heart of popular struggles for social justice and political change. Iran's Green movement in 2009 followed by Tunisia's Jasmine revolution and Egypt's January 25 revolution in 2011 set in motion a seemingly unending debate among political commentators, journalists, and academics about whether or not the "revolution will be tweeted."[2] For new media enthusiasts, resistance was reduced to a mouse click and the internet became the beacon of social activism. Social networking websites were considered the main tool of political mobilization and action. The U.S. State Department's intervention to delay a planned Twitter upgrade that would cut daytime service to Iranians disputing the elections in June 2009 remains a shining example.[3] But the use of communication technologies in social movements is far from being a recent development, nor is it restricted to new digital media. In his paper, Murphy shows how radio and cinema were used in a Latin American context to advance environmental causes. Undoubtedly, the internet ushered in new possibilities for and forms of resistance. However, it would be a theoretical overreach to say that the rise of the internet has altogether displaced older media. Rather, what characterizes the current state of global media is an increased integration of more traditional channels in a hypermediated environment. We are increasingly witnessing a hybridization of media combining the traditional and the new. How else would we make sense of the footage of Egyptians protesting in public squares, filmed by *Al-Jazeera* and streamed on its website? If we are to stick to a binary mode of thinking about "old" and "new" media, much would be lost and much would be left unaccounted for. Without actual bodies that communicate dissent there would be nothing to tweet about, a fact that new media enthusiasts often seem to forget. Rather than proving that revolutions will be tweeted or that resistance is increasingly digitalized, the use of new media technologies by political activists demonstrates the historical centrality of communication technologies in all political struggles. Murphy's case studies show that there is nothing "old" about the use of documentary films and community radio. What make the media discussed in both papers inevitably new are the ways they are interconnected with other local communicative channels and integrated in the global circuit of

information. Moving beyond a technologically deterministic approach, both authors provide an understanding of media as tools of resistance, not as isolated technologies but through their embeddedness in particular socio-political settings and cultural forms of meaning-making. Together, these papers show the multiple shapes and forms of resistance, but also its shifting targets. Local Bolivian activists used community radio to create and diffuse an environmentally conscious local discourse. Chinese activists used Twitter to discuss forbidden topics, from reporting human rights abuses to calling for the overthrow of the Chinese ruling regime.

Conversely, we must keep in mind that well-established orders have also, over time, mastered the art of resistance to socio-political change. A hegemonic system resists challenges to its legitimacy as fiercely as activists create them. In order to fully grasp the dynamics of resistance and social transformation today we must also look at the target—be it the state or global capitalism—and understand its technologies of resistance to change. Following recent popular uprising in Egypt, Chinese authorities banned the word "Egypt" from Chinese online search engines. Great Firewalls are also adaptable to changing tides and the disruptions that threaten to destabilize their orders.

Notes

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Chapter 13

Resuscitating "resistance" in the age of global climate change
Notes on media, culture and environmental discourse in Latin America

Patrick D. Murphy

On April 20–22, 2010, Bolivia hosted the "People's World Conference on Climate Change and Mother Earth Rights." Held in Cochabamba, a city known for its history of oppositional politics, the conference was an attempt by the Evo Morales administration to respond to the un-ambitious and tooth-less "accord" generated by the global north at the Copenhagen Climate Change Summit in late 2009. Among those who attended the conference in Bolivia were Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa, Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega, anti-globalization activists Naomi Klein and Jose Bove, and Avatar Director James Cameron. Prior to the event, U.S. Environmentalist Bill McKibben praised the gathering as a meeting that ran against the grain of Copenhagen's focus on "power politics, not science," speculating:

> we'll get a jolt of political energy from the south, … after all, it's by definition a People's Summit, free from the kind of corporate interference that helped sink the Copenhagen conference in December (Bolivia's Supreme Court having not yet decided that corporations are people).[1]

In a time of an unfolding global tragedy of the commons, events like the Bolivian Climate Change conference are important because they stake out and make salient a different sort of discourse—an environmental focus as opposed to a trade focus founded on, to use the words of Evo Morales, "respect for the rights of Mother Earth and for the atmosphere."[2] Indeed, in an age when the "dominant framework for explaining the world is the eco-nomic representation of things,"[3] an alternative conceptualization of people's relationship with the earth should be seen as, if not revolutionary, at the very least counter-hegemonic.

For global media studies scholars, examining how alternative environmental discourses unfold and register within and through communities of media users and producers should be an investigative focus of particular importance, especially given the truly "global" nature of the broader conversation about environmental stewardship. In an effort to pursue such a research agenda, this

chapter examines recent currents within the context of Latin American media which suggest how social networks and cultural identity have been mobilized to elaborate discourses regarding the care and treatment of the earth that run in stark contrast to the dominant market-driven discourse associated with commercial media. In the process, I want to make a case for resuscitating "resistance" as an important theoretical tool for interrogating the relationship between power and experience in networked communities because it has lost much of its critical edge over the last few decades in media studies.

Rethinking resistance

Resuscitating the notion of resistance in media studies is not an unproblematic maneuver. First, its primary theoretical counter balance, ideology, has been thoroughly battered over the years. In his review of ideology's "odd career" in media and cultural studies, British media scholar John Corner notes that it once held center stage in cultural theory and criticism, but slipped to the margins over the last three decades as researchers explored the possibilities of newer ideas that placed less emphasis on "texts and their power over subjectivity."[4] At the heart of this loss of theoretical currency was the sense that ideology was both too rigid an idea to employ for careful thinking about power and too slippery a concept to get a purchase on, so theorists began to move away from epistemic renderings of the term (e.g. "false consciousness" and erroneous beliefs) to more complex, pluralistic and contingent perspectives (e.g. "ideologies").[5]

In media studies, the diminished place of ideology can actually be traced directly through the mutation of resistance, transforming from a notion grounded in materialism and political agency to a construct tied to more performative and aesthetic elements of culture. Early on much of the foundational research in media studies that explored the dialogical nature of ideology and resistance was inspired by Stuart Hall's[6] encoding/decoding model and other works that drew from Gramsci and Althusser. The organizing principle of this research was the unequal distribution of power, and inquiry focused on the meaning that audiences generated with different texts through processes of acquiescence or resistance. The "negotiation of meaning," a theoretical construct rooted in the encoding/decoding model, was central to the trajectory of this corpus of research, engaging the issue of ideological reproduction by foregrounding how active audiences negotiated preferred or oppositional readings through intentionality within particular historical conditions.[7]

But selectively charting a path of inquiry from this model by accentuating negotiation and opposition at the expense of acquiescence, many of the early studies took a decidedly non-ideological route. For instance, Fiske's seminal research on popular culture drew extreme lines between hegemonic forces and subaltern practices, establishing a default setting for media studies scholarship on the ability of marginalized segments of the population, such as women and

youths, to use tactical pleasures to subvert the dominant social order.[8] By the early 1990s the vast majority of media studies had moved away from the analysis of ideological transfer, advancing in its place the sense that meaning-making was highly complex and performed through multiple, ever-changing configurations of subjectivity. "The people's pleasure,"[9] not ideology, took center stage as researchers turned to the task of interpreting the ways cultural practices could empower people to be creative, discerning media users—a characteristic especially indicative of fan studies. And while this move may have escaped from some of the pitfalls of the more mechanical, oppositional rendering of power relations of the earlier scholarship, it was still seen as implicitly positioning resistance as a preordained activity of audiences.[10]

By the new millennium, scholars of the global south had begun to respond to the body of reception work and fan studies in the West with an understandable sense of puzzlement. Reflecting on pronouncements of the impossibility of studying enigmatic audiences coupled with the strong focus on audiences resistive capabilities, these scholars[11] argued that the literature seemed to be theorized as if taking place in an unhistoricized capitalist modernity where liberal citizenship centered on consumer democracy devoid of religion and community culture in the public realm. Indeed, many of the findings of reception research in the West celebrated the self-aware, active media consumer armed with textual poaching skills and guarded by multiple subjectivities. In other words, as a guiding construct in reception research, resistance presented a rather telling ideological sleight of hand in that scholars privileged qualities central to dominant Western ideology such as individuality, freedom, and self-determinism, while at the same time deflecting attention from the persuaders and the powerful.[12] Oddly, as more than one media scholar from the global south has pointed out, this line of research was being produced just as the ideological range of corporate media was expanding across the globe and as a greater portion of the world's population was moving into audiencehood.[13]

As media studies in the West did begin to "globalize," influenced by postmodernist and postcolonial authors as well as Latin American writers such as Jésus Martín-Barbero[14] and Néstor García Canclini,[15] arguments about deterritorialization, fragmentation, diaspora, and cultural memory led to a greater interest in cultural flow. Through this advent of a "global" media studies, an overarching focus on cultural identity emerged as scholars pursued fresh ways to theorize how identity formation could be examined against the grain of essentialisms.[16] This route often started with questioning concepts of identity in relation to nation-based hegemonies, and has led to a large body of work on hybridity and its theoretical brethren (*creolization, mestizaje, borderlands, cultural reconversion*). More recent scholarship has wrestled with the notion of cosmopolitanism as a measure of transnational cultural identity and as a "way of imagining belonging beyond the local and the national."[17]

As with early fan studies, resistance, though rarely explicitly evoked as an important construct, has a haunting presence in theorizing. In fact, as the emphasis within much of this research has tended to be on creativity and complexity, there is a sense that hybrid cultural elaborations are by their nature resistive, be they stirred by transnational forces or grounded in popular memory. Here nationalism (the state) and globalization (transnational imperialism) are presented in an odd dialogue of sorts, pitted against one another as interchangeable sites of struggle, domination, resistance and empowerment, depending upon what position threatens identity. It is this very sense that, for instance, nation-states and national culture, once the suffocating sources of hegemonic culture against the grain of which subaltern groups expressed their difference and identity, now serve as funds through which cultural resistance and empowerment are preformed counter to global imperialism—an investigative route that Heise argues leads to a "theoretical stalemate."[18]

More technologically and somewhat less culturally driven has been the work on "media convergence." In this scholarship, the very fact that ideas and information are now so thoroughly networked and individualized via personal technology leads to a sort of hyperactive version of audience activity. Accordingly, convergent mediascapes are theorized as less threatening or deterministic than the old-school world of media articulations found in Hall's encoding/decoding vision of ideology, subject formation, and popular resistance. In the convergence scholarship, rather than conceptualizing media codes as imbued with varying degrees of discursive closure aligned with a dominant cultural order, via the new media horizon's promise of individual agency and creativity, researchers now celebrate how "digital natives" of the media convergent landscape are capable of navigating the "access gaps" of "new media capitals" and establishing collective, user-centered "participatory culture."[19] Conceptualized in such a way, the power of ideology is again diluted, this time by virtue of the fact that creative technology mobilizes the consumer-participant to explore, create, and self-define within the "complexity" of multi-platform media through that most celebrated of tropes, "interactivity." Now framed as "producers" instead of audience members, resistance becomes the domain of "participants" and "media optimists" who freely interact in a sphere of digital convergence. Casting media consumers-users in such a way presents ideological power as a faint and fragmented shadow on a quite distant, dimly illuminated wall.

But despite this apparent dismissal of ideological power, the convergence scholarship's rendering of collective mobilization—how citizens find and engage with one another, organize themselves and take action—is important for a reinvestment in resistance because of how it positions agency. For instance, Jenkins argues that reception remains politically important because of how citizens "apply what they have learned as consumers of popular culture toward more overt forms of political activism."[20] This "application" is animated by communication tools that engender a greater sense of participation

and cultural resonance beyond consumption, and which are therefore capable of transforming the public's role in the political process by "bringing the realm of political discourse closer to the everyday life experiences of citizens."[21]

Clearly in an age of increasing access to personalized, mobile communication technologies, this shift from negotiation-as-resistance to resistive interactivity has its theoretical benefits, chief among these the fact that it directs inquiry from the ideal-interpretative back to the material-productive. But I want to argue that its full potential to guide scholarship is not just a matter of collectivity elaborated around the digital convergence (e.g. individuals sharing and organizing virtually "on line"). Indeed, as much of the world's population continues to experience access to media technologies in quite fragmented, uneven ways we still need to remember that "convergence" is but one face among many of the ways that citizens can use media to communicate and mobilize collective action.

In this sense it is perhaps worth considering how resistance, from a Geertzian point of view, is a matter of social action imbued with cultural meaning regardless of whether that resistance is taking place through converged media communities or some more traditionally recognizable form of community-based communication. As Geertz wrote in *The Interpretation of Culture*:

> Culture is the fabric of meaning in terms of which human beings interpret their experience and guide their action; social structure is the form that action takes, the actually existing network of social relations. Culture and social structure are then but different abstractions from the same phenomena. The one considers social action in respect to its meaning for those who carry it out, the other considers it in terms of its contribution to the functioning of some social system.[22]

Drawing from Geertz's juxtaposition of culture and social structure, we might understand that while technology contributes by priming the pump of resistance, it is through webs of cultural meaning that the discursive properties of resistance flow and make sense.[23] Thus as citizens engage in the elaboration of counter hegemonic communication, whether as user-creators or participants in networked communities, the cultural fabric of these activities guides action through the "actually existing network of social relations."[24]

Based on this understanding of how cultural meaning and social relations dovetail, I want to argue for a fusion of sorts between the hybridity and convergence scholarship that might help lead to a reinvestment of resistance that, drawing on the politics of identity formation and interactivity, respectively, could emphasize a grounded materialism and political agency of collective cultural production and action. For researchers, within this approach lies the potential for an analytically nuanced understanding of resistance (e.g. contextually specific and historically contingent), while also more broadly recognizing resistance as not just an ingredient within cultural rituals or aesthetic

webs of meaning (although it is certainly that), but as a practice that exercises political agency deliberately against hegemonic power. The interpretive value of such a conceptual rendering of resistance is that it requires taking an investigative path that emphasizes material structure in actually existing networks in relation to the discursive aspects of global media.

Resistance to what?

But to move global media scholarship in this direction begs the question, resistance to what? Circling back to the issue of the environment and the case of Latin America, here I would like to make a case for the study of globally dominant environmental discourses and the communities of media users and producers that are crafting "green" environmental discourses that work against the grain of the status quo.

In *The Politics of the Earth*, political scientist John S. Dryzek provides a detailed overview of the genesis and trajectory of the various environmental discourses that have been deployed to shape and steer debate about everything from resource control and population growth to environmental justice and wilderness preservation. Within this contested terrain over meaning, he argues that the environmental discourse that has emerged with the most force is the "Promethean discourse."[25] This dominant discourse is founded on the notion that Earth is a veritable cornucopia of unlimited possibilities and abundance. It is built on assertion that Earth's resources are designed to be exploited, and that growth and material well-being are generated through this process. As such, extraction of Earth's resources and exploitation of her bounty are seen as not only unproblematic but necessary.

Since the Promethean discourse is ontologically grounded on the ideas that there are no real environmental limits and that human innovation as expressed in markets and technology will solve any problems encountered, it reveals a strong affinity with market libertarianism.[26] As I have argued elsewhere,[27] this has allowed it to dovetail with neoliberalism in that both, ostensibly at least, shun state oversight and protectionism and operate with the guiding principle that liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms produces innovations. So, both the environmental discourse and the economic philosophy flow rather seamlessly into one another, promoting a business-friendly view of environmental stewardship and agency. During the 1980s and 1990s the ideological range of this view was expanded considerably through policy reforms involving a combination of deregulation, withdrawal of state social provisions and foreign direct investment, all of which created an environment ripe for the global growth and expansion of private media firms. Not only was the World Trade Organization (WTO) created to monitor and steer "entrepreneurial" developments, but the re-regulatory process stimulated the rise of transnational media corporations (TNCs) and buttress the dominance of some of the most powerful media firms of the global south.

In this sense the Promethean discourse is implicitly underwritten by neo-liberalism in that the linkage is promoted through interest group structures and practices grounded in particular modes of economic and political articulation. This articulation largely goes undetected because in most "mediascapes" and "ideoscapes"[28] it has become naturalized and thus taken for granted. However, that doesn't mean it is invisible, as it can still be located by how it is expressed through privileged frameworks for understanding aligned with dominant interests; for instance, through how ideas like "progress," "growth," "democracy," "freedom," "life style," et cetera, are presented. In my view, the capacity of such a dynamic to shape and disseminate thought content defines this process as a necessarily ideological one, though muted and camouflaged via consumer choice and "corporate responsibility" branding. As such, interventions by way of countering with an alternative discourse should be viewed as a resistive activity.

In some parts of Latin American such interventions are beginning to take shape and define national ideoscapes and local mediascapes ideologically oppositional to the Promethean discourse which lies at the center of most if not all of the region's commercial media networks—an assertion punctuated by the earlier mentioned Bolivian Climate Change conference and its reflection of the region's emerging climate of "green" environmental consciousness.

"El Ley de Cine" and environmental consciousness in Ecuador

In many ways Ecuador is not only a regional but a global leader in environmental consciousness. Perhaps nothing expresses this more than its new constitution, adopted on October 7, 2008, where environment stewardship looms large. Its preamble states, for instance: "Celebrating the natural world, Mother Nature, to which we are a part and which is vital for our existence."[29] It continues: "We want to construct: A new form of citizen lifestyle in relation to the diversity and in harmony with nature, to achieve good living, el sumak kawsay."[30]

This notion of the "sumak kawsay" draws directly from Andean cosmology, and is often translated as "el buen vivir" or "living well." However, contrary to consumer culture ideas about the good life comprised of material possessions, comfort and leisure, this conceptualization of living well proposes that incorporation of nature within history understood through people striving to live life in harmony with the earth. Title II: Rights, article 10 of the Constitution explicitly draws attention to this ideal, asserting that, just as "people, communities, and collectives" have guaranteed rights, the environment is also subject to the same guarantes.[31] This idea is further punctuated in the second section (Sección segunda) of Title II: Rights, article 14, under the heading of "clean environment" ("ambiente sano"). Here the Ecuadorian Constitution formally recognizes citizens' right to "live in an ecologically stable and clean

environment, that guarantees sustainability and the good life, sumak kawsay." This right is further inscribed into Ecuadorian law by declaring "the public's interest in the preservation of the environment, the conservation of ecosystems, biodiversity, the integrity of the genetic inheritance of the country, the prevention of environmental damage, and the recuperation of degraded natural spaces."[32]

Ecuador's constitutional re-framing of the relationship between people and the earth is an attempt by the state to reassert its national identity as a country that prides itself on its biodiversity and environmental richness, after a host of eco-abuse tragedies and unfolding environmental issues publically surfaced to reveal deep-seeded conflicts between communities and corporations. These ranged from the destruction of coastal mangrove forests for the development of shrimp farming that has caused salinity of agricultural lands and fresh water, to the environmentally devastating dumping of oil sludge and related toxins by transnational petroleum companies near Amazonian communities and fragile rainforest ecosystems.

With the new constitution, environmentalists now have specific articles from which to draw, allowing them to employ the state's own language to confront environmental abuses and shape policy. Indeed, this constitutionally driven invitation to "*construct a new form of citizen lifestyle in relation to the diversity and in harmony with nature* [*sumak kawsay*]" has, in some interesting ways, re-energized those already involved in environmental activism throughout the country by providing them with a now-legitimized platform from which to speak.

Ecuadorian media producers have been among the most anxious to explore the potential of this opening to challenge the status quo and shape a new public conversation about the environment. In Guayaquil, Manta and Quito, Ecuador's three largest cities, documentarians and others have taken this significant historical moment of environmental recognition and political inscription as an opportunity to renew the purpose and possibility of "green" media. For instance, in the coastal cities of Guayaquil and Manta there has been a surge in activity of a loosely knit together group of videographers creating programs about environmental challenges facing local communities and ecosystems. In one running half-hour public channel program, *EcoHuellas*, which runs in Guayaquil, Quito and Manta on Tuesdays at 5:30 p.m., a new environmental issue is tackled every week. The program targets young adults and is designed to help them get a better understanding of their own relationship with and impact on nature. Its producer and host Pilar Piana says that the show is "an attempt to get Ecuadorians to consume less, recycle and to understand that the Earth's future is in our hands."[33] Others have worked to create video documentaries which are screened in local theaters or state-funded community centers and which are discussed afterwards, such as the Cine de Memoria held in MAAC CINE in Guayaquil and Manta (MAAC is an acronym of the Museo Antropológico y de Arte Contemporáneo, whose theaters

are owned by Ecuador's Central Bank). These screenings draw activists, intellectuals and information-seeking citizens alike, and generate an interesting public-sphere type dialogue about regional and national issues. While these efforts are extraordinary considering the lack of resources that many of the video documentarians must overcome, they are also quite aware of the limited impact of their efforts with the inability to reach larger audiences. Despite these limitations, the commitment to the creation of environmentally conscious storytelling is impressive.

In Quito, the picture is somewhat different as the city has a more established filmmaking community. For instance, the community cinema, *Ochoymedio* (named after the Fellini film, *8½*), has become a place that not only regularly screens the work of Ecuadorian and other Latin American environmental filmmakers and video artists, but perhaps even more importantly, a space through which media producers and environmental activists, among others, can meet and share ideas. Ironically, *Ochoymedio*'s owner and General Director, Mariana Andrade, bought the building that houses the cinema/community center/coffee house from her earnings as the producer for the Hollywood action film, *Proof of Life* (2000), starring Russell Crowe and Meg Ryan. *Ochoymedio* runs no Hollywood movies, instead Andrade and her partners use the community media center to create opportunities for Ecuadorian and other Latin American filmmakers to screen their work and network, and for audiences to see work that wouldn't typically appear in other venues.[34] Through these activities of screenings, creative networking and community building, the influence of *Ochoymedio* has grown and moved beyond the limits of Quito into other parts of Ecuador and has helped shape a broader social consciousness around the environment and other socially resonant topics.

Significantly, the links between Quito's *Ochoymedio*, the MACC CINE in Guayaquil and Manta, and the creative personnel of local public and private television have helped facilitate the building of a pan-Ecuadorian network of filmmakers, documentarians, TV producers and directors, and others involved in creating original content. They have also opened up opportunities for videographers and others involved in environmental issues to meet and develop ideas with others already more established in the media scene. This network of "*cinestas*" was on full display with the Ecuadorian premier of *Crude*, a documentary billed as "an inside look at the 'Ecuadorian Chernobyl'" which follows the plight of an Amazonian community's fight against the environmental abuses of multinational corporate power. Screened at the Universidad Central de Ecuador on May 7, 2009, the film was attended by some 500 media personnel, artists, activists, environmentalists and concerned citizens. Many of the theatergoers represented the core group of television producers, directors, creative personnel and policy commissioners who are working together to craft Ecuador's "Ley de Cine." Indeed, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between those representing Ecuadorian decision-makers and media agenda-setters

from those who are entering the conversation from a more grassroots base. And it is precisely this mixture of people, dialogue and creative opportunity that makes this moment in Ecuadorian media policy-making interesting and open to engendering an alternative Earth discourse.

More specifically, the elaboration of a "Ley de Cine" has been made possible through the re-election of President Rafael Correa in 2008. As part of his platform, Correa promised a new division within government, changing from the Minestério de Cultura, Educación y Deportes to three "Minesterios": Ministerio de Cultura, Minestério de Educación and Minestério de Deportes. Below the Minestério de Cultura, what is now called Consejo Nacional de Cinematografía del Ecuador (CnCINE) is to be replaced by the Instituto Ecuadoriano del Cine y Audiovisual (IECA). The IECA is to be comprised of three groups of commissioners (Directors, Producers & Distributors, Technicians & Actors) who will be selected and charged with crafting the "Ley de Cine." The objectives of the committee will be as diverse as elaborating a "media constitution," fostering a national film movement, lowering taxes on filmmakers, mandating that all TV and film employ 80 percent of Ecuadorian creative talent (writers, directors, actors) and production personnel; include the development/production of commercials for TV as part of these stipulations (as this is where many filmmakers also make a living), and form an "Escuela de Cine" to produce more Ecuadorian filmmakers and producers.

According to Mayfe Bosque, a local producer and a media insider nominated as one of the commissioners, the last of these is of monumental importance, because most want-to-be filmmakers don't have access to training, so "just go straight into TV as cable carriers and move into TV production and directing."[35] Through this process they just recreate models from Argentina and other Latin American media centers, which is viewed by many of the creative personnel outside the established television circles as something profoundly ill-suited for developing a truly Ecuadorian film–TV model. Moreover, many established television producers are thought to just steal ideas from Argentina and Brazil. These "piratas de creatividad" (creativity pirates) present such ideas as if original and fresh, but in reality "do little to stimulate an Ecuadorian vision of television and film."[36] As such, the establishment of a new film school is widely considered a pivotal remedy for ending the cycle of borrowed ideas and inbreed storytelling.

When taken together, the various creative and political forces converging in Ecuador suggest a national media industry that is as full of contradictions as it is of potential. But despite the fears and the incestuous nature of some of the television industry's reconstitution, there is a general feeling of excitement about creating a vision of television that is truly Ecuadorian. At the heart of this sense of a dawn of a new age of television is the radical notion that a different kind of television and filmmaking can be elaborated. This process is beginning to be shaped by a "media constitution" that by law must take into

consideration the rights of the environment and employ Ecuadorian talent to do so. It is being animated by a networked community of creative media-makers who have already established resumés of socially progressive story-telling. As such, efforts to "institutionalize" a media model that advances the Ecuadorian ideal of the "sumak kawsay" are more than just hopeful because their development is in the hands of a pool of creative talent *already invested* in creating green media unsympathetic to, indeed highly resistive to, neoliberal globalization.

Community radio and "going green" in Bolivia

In Bolivia something quite different is happening. An awakening of "green" consciousness has been less the product of artists and activists and policy-makers than of the efforts of community groups with explicit cultural and political agendas. As such, to locate an environmentally green media discourse one has to look at local media, not national media, and its support networks or constitutional law. Indeed, it could be argued that while the emergence of a "green" discourse within Bolivia is, as in Ecuador, intimately linked to an indigenous cosmology, it is expressed in relation to more pragmatic concerns and challenges affecting community life. Here the role of radio has become pivotal.

Though there may be various reasons why community radio as opposed to some other medium has become instrumental in articulating an environmental discourse in Bolivia, much of its status in shaping the contours of the public dialogue comes directly from trust. As Bolivian sociologist Oscar "Oki" Vega asserts, "because commercial media have functioned as an industry instead of something communal," they are perceived of as institutions "whose interests are divorced from the everyday reality" of most Bolivians. As such, communal radio is "much more important than TV or journalism."[37] This dynamic has not been missed by the Morales administration, which has deliberately looked to communicate through non-commercial channels and distance itself from commercial media because of its adversarial relationship. In doing so, the current administration has managed to distance itself from the elites who run the media such as Grupo Prisa, and by extension the economic model within which they are ascribed: neoliberalism. However, even these efforts have had their limits in terms of the state's ability to connect with "el pueblo" (the people) in more intimate ways, as the state channel does not directly address community issues, nor does it broadcast content in languages such as Aymara or Quechua. Within this context, community radio has become of vital importance, not only to the communities it serves but also to those who hold broader political power.

The case of "Casa Juvenil de las Culturas Wayna Tambo" in the city of El Alto is illustrative of the place of radio in the lives of many Bolivians, especially those living in more marginalized communities. Wayna Tambo was

created as a community center in 1994, and established its radio station in 2002. The name draws from the Aymara language, and means pride/protect ("orgullo/protectar" = Wayna) and encounter/exchange ("encuentro/inter-cambio" = Tambo). According to the center's director, Santos, the focus is quite consciously on the "production of culture in place of cultural consump-tion," and is focused on a long term process of raising community "self-esteem" through the "central themes of cultural heritage, citizenship, diversity and ecology."[38]

The station broadcasts in Spanish and Aymara and includes a range of musical programming from rock, metal, hip-hop and fusion music, to talk-shows and interviews on citizenship, cultural history, alternative medicine, and community life. It also focuses on local environmental issues tied to concrete community activities, such as workshops on waste disposal, plastic bag recycling, water bottle exchanges, battery recycling, community beautification, organic fertilizers for small home gardens and, increasingly, on issues of water con-servation. These efforts are important because at almost one million residents, El Alto is a large and influential urban center in Bolivia, and probably the largest indigenous city in Latin America. Collectively the role of the center's activities and radio station's programming is to "break" what Santos described as "the imperialism inside."[39] The commitment to offer a diversity of pro-gramming, theater events and community workshops is a means through which to invite various parts of the community to feel connected, and in the process close generation gaps and create a space for inclusive dialogue.

Through this commitment the community center has become a space for what Santos called "our vision" where "our perspective" is given voice. "We do not claim it to be 'the truth', but rather a perspective that deserves to be heard." Significantly those involved at Wayna Tambo argue that a search for an Andean vision must take place through a diversity of voices: "You must listen to the other. We do not define the country. But through this we can see more clearly who we are, identify our values and question authority and central power. It's not radical, it's just a way to build a more inclusive world not driven by one set of interests."[40]

Within this setting the local connection to the global has a certain existential immediacy, and it is not one to be celebrated. The distant mountains that frame the outskirts of El Alto are losing their snowy caps at an alarming rate, and providing consistent access to potable water has become so problematic that it is now the unavoidable theme of local graffiti artists. Moreover, the recent history of El Alto citizens' bloody confrontation with state plans to allow foreign investors to exploit natural gas and privatize water has left many residents with a profound suspicion of "globalization" efforts, especially those connected to natural resources. It is through this sense of place, identity and memory that an environmental imagination is being forged. The resulting vision of environmental stewardship is the one articulated directly in relation to a collective "indigenous self," inscribed in a history of abuse and neglect

and now being negotiated in a landscape of disappearing glaciers and rapidly dropping water tables—concrete reminders that the Earth is, in no unclear terms, in peril, and the community's relationship with it, like its own identity, fragile and in need of attention.

In many ways Wayna Tambo's mission as a community center is to operationalize this sense of immediacy through what its contributors understand as an "urban ecology." Discursively this could be characterized as a democratic pragmatism ("leave it to the people") wedded to an indigenous green consciousness ("people must change").[41] Through this productive tension, Wayna Tambo invites listeners to learn about environmental stewardship while at the same time reinvesting in their own indigenous, and now very urban, identity. This requires an underlying belief in cultural agency, constituted through a resistance to the globalization model writ-large as well as the struggle to free oneself from the "internal imperialism" that Santo fears plagues too many of his fellow citizens. Within this struggle, community radio is facilitating the creation of and reliance upon important local networks that are both culturally empowering and action-oriented, and that are serving to shape a progressive environmental politics grounded in indigenous memory.

Conclusion

Despite its relative marginality in global politics, it is interesting to observe how alternatives to the Promethean discourse are surfacing with force in Latin America. That should perhaps come as no surprise because of the recent changes in media policies that have been made possible by the populist administrations that have come to power in the 2000s.[42] Such resistive activity is also an extension of the region's rich tradition of cultural criticism and the interrogation of power, be it corporate or state, and the cultural hegemony of consumer capitalism. After all, this is the region that taught us how to read Donald Duck as an imperial text and delivered to us pedagogy for the oppressed. More recently and more dramatically, it has provided case studies for how to confront neoliberal globalization (e.g. the 1994 Zapatista "insurrection of words not bullets" against NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement), the 2003 Bolivian water wars to take on the privatization of water, and the 2005 anti-CAFTA political theater of Bloque Popular in Honduras) as well as, with the People's World Conference on Climate Change and Mother Earth Rights in 2010, global environmental policy-making.

Within this tradition of ideological critique and political action, the environmentally conscious activities in Bolivia and Ecuador provide a sense for how social actors can mobilize media to exercise cultural resistance through the elaboration of discourses that tell new and different stories. Indeed, in its own quiet way it is hard not to be inspired by the resistive and socially progressive elements of political and cultural life emerging in Bolivia and Ecuador. These may be unfolding in two very different ways: In Ecuador, professional media

artists and activists are working collectively and creatively through the new constitution's framing of the "sumak kawsay" (good living) to establish a green-leaning media policy. Whereas in Bolivia's case, because of citizens' distrust of private and state media, and international investors, indigenous communities have taken it upon themselves to set up local media centers to create dialogue, reestablish roots and trajectories of identity, and confront environment issues, which are understood as indivisible. In both cases, efforts at elaborating alternative environmental discourses are organized around the respect and care for the environment, and draw their strength from socially integrated networks and cultural memory grounded in indigenous (Andean–Amazonia) cultural heritage.

These efforts are not emerging in a local vacuum, and are very much a response to the negative impact the neoliberal policies have had within those settings as well as, of course, the effects of climate change and environmental abuse. As such they represent direct, politically motivated efforts to engender a different way to think about and develop relationships with the earth. In this respect they reveal an ideological confrontation, and so McKibben is right: we in the global north should get a little jolt of political energy from the global south.

For global media theorists, we need to draw from these lessons to return to resistance as an important construct within our interpretive tool kit. We cannot be satisfied with engaging issues of media flow and culture just in terms of the complexity and trajectory of aesthetic or culturally performative activities of interpretive communities. Nor should we remain so captivated by the game of echoes played out in our increasingly integrated networked societies and the participants who creatively operate within them, that mediation becomes, uncritically, our default point of departure and return. Within such a theoretical context ideas like hegemonic power and related concerns (e.g. corporate and/or state influence) become more difficult to speak about, and important issues related to them, such as the tension between ideology and experience, become more easily tossed aside as passé or naïve, and as such, not worthy of scholarly pursuit.

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31 Translated by author from original: Title II: Rights, article 10 of the Constitution of Ecuador: "Las personas, comunidades, pueblos, nacionalidades y colectivos son titulares y gozarán de los derechos garantizados en la Constitución y en los instrumentos internacionales. La naturaleza será sujeto de aquellos derechos que le reconozca la Constitución."

32 Translated by author from original: Title II: Rights, second section of article 14 of the Constitution of Ecuador: "Se reconoce el derecho de la población a vivir en un ambiente sano y ecológicamente equilibrado, que garantice la sostenibilidad y el buen vivir, sumak kawsay. Se declara de interés público la preservación del ambiente, la conservación de los ecosistemas, la biodiversidad y la integridad del patrimonio genético del país, la prevención del daño ambiental y la recuperación de los espacios naturales degradados."

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Power and transgression in the global media age

The strange case of Twitter in China

Guobin Yang

Using the strange case of Twitter in China—strange because Twitter is blocked in China but still accessed by tens of thousands—this chapter analyzes how Chinese internet activists cross the virtual borders to engage in radical Twitter activism. I argue that when skilled actors take advantage of international opportunities and global media to negotiate a constrained domestic environment, they will be able to engage in transnational activism radical enough to challenge state power. Chinese-language Twitter activism thus occurs as a result of the combination of three conditions—a favorable international political opportunity structure, a hospitable global media environment, and the techno-cultural creativity of skilled activists. The implication is that state power comes under siege in the age of global media, not just because of global information flows, or of international pressure on nation-states, or oppositional activism, but because of the convergence of the three conditions.

Virtual borders and state power

Borders and orders have a peculiar relationship. Border-drawing is a technology of power, a means by which nation-states legitimate and exercise orders over the population within their borders. Yet this relationship is rarely stable. Standing on the margins, borders have an ambiguous, messy, and porous character. They are pregnant with risks and uncertainties. They may be transgressed and crossed; they link as much as divide. Thus they are liminal zones of contingency and potentiality.

   In its early history, the internet was often viewed as a new frontier in human civilization. Today, this border zone is being carved up by political power and economic capital.[1] Yet there remain peripheral spaces not unlike the border zones of the national territory. It is in these liminal zones, I shall argue, that Gramscian wars of position are being waged against the power of the state. The border zones of the internet are where

orders are both exercised and transgressed. In making this argument, this chapter shows neither the decline of state power in the age of globalization nor the weakening of citizen activism, but the paradoxical and parallel expansion of both. The image of global media appears equally ambivalent. Their very globality—i.e., the extent to which they connect or divide national boundaries—becomes both a means and a stake in contemporary political struggles.

The internet in China has border zones at different levels. In comparison with the websites run by government agencies, commercial websites resemble border zones because of the differential presence of power. Compared with the highly visible, nationally known websites, lesser known websites are like border zones. Even the same website has its border zones and centers. The first page of a website, like that of a newspaper, has a more central position than others and is thus more of a zone of editorial power.[2]

This chapter studies a peculiar type of border zone in Chinese cyberspace, which I will call forbidden/virtual border zones. They consist of websites which are on servers outside of China, are blocked in China, but are accessed by users inside China through circumvention technologies. These websites are not border zones in the conventional sense. More like forbidden zones, they are barred from entering the border. Yet like the forbidden zones (such as banned books) in earlier times, they cannot be completely controlled. Transgression is common. Through their everyday practices of "scaling" the Great Firewall to enter these forbidden zones, resourceful users span and test the boundaries between the inside and the outside. As a result, they transform these forbidden zones into virtual border zones, virtual meaning both online and "in essence." By examining the forms, formations, and effects of these virtual border zones, I explore the dialectics of connectivity and division, state power and citizen transgression, and borders and orders, in the age of global communication. Data for the analysis come from participant observations over a one-year period and documents in the Chinese-language media. I start with some historical background about China's entry into the global media age.

China enters the global media age: some historical background

If there was one defining moment of China's entry into the age of global media, it was spring 1989. When students protested in Tiananmen Square, they knew that the whole world was watching them on television, something that had never happened in China before. Western journalists, including Dan Rather of CBS News, were in Beijing to cover Mikhail Gorbachev's visit only to find themselves in the middle of protesting students. The awareness of a global audience was an important factor in keeping the student protesters in the Square.[3] China thus entered the age of

global media with fear and trepidation. The fear was that global media could be a powerful tool of destabilization and popular mobilization against the government.

It was somewhat surprising then, that given the lessons of 1989, the Chinese government would move to connect China to the global internet network in 1994. The fact is that at that time Chinese leaders saw the internet as a new economy and another tool for transmitting party policies to the citizens rather than as a tool of everyday communication. As Mueller and Tan argue, Chinese leaders "believe … that IT can give them *both* modernization *and* enhanced powers of central control and stability. Indeed, from the point of view of the state, China's situation needs the internet to retain a significant degree of control over the flow of ideas and information."[4]

The subsequent history of the internet proved the Chinese leadership's thinking about the IT industry to be only partially correct. The IT economy took off and as recently as 2010, a Chinese government white paper on "The Internet in China" affirms the importance of the internet to China's "reform and opening-up policies and modernization drive."[5] Yet the internet turns out to be much more than an economic driver. It has posed challenges to party authorities and the political system because Chinese citizens immediately found in it a new channel for obtaining information and expressing themselves, including expressing dissent.

Over the years, to curtail global information flows on the internet in and out of China, the Chinese government has built a complex system of internet control and monitoring, blocking or filtering information from outside China and censoring information inside. A so-called "Great Firewall" is erected as a virtual boundary separating Chinese cyberspace from the outside. These technologies of power, however, are almost always countered by the transgressive behavior of Chinese internet activists. Savvy activists have developed multiple ways of overcoming internet censorship and control in order to access forbidden websites. In their attempts to transgress the virtual borders, Chinese online activists find support in foreign governments, international governmental and non-governmental institutions, the global human rights discourse, and the global media. As a result, the space of global information flows becomes highly contested.

Twitter activism in China as transnational activism

Virtual border zones fall into many types, including:

- foreign websites blocked in China such as Facebook and Twitter
- Chinese blog-hosting websites run on foreign servers such as blogger.com
- individual Chinese blogs run on foreign blog-hosting sites such as wordpress.com and blogspot.com

- Chinese-language websites outside of China such as cnd.org and xys.org, and
- private mailing-lists going into or out of China.

Online activism is common in all these spaces.[6] I focus on Twitter here because of the radicalism of Chinese-language Twitter activism. The fact that activists in China have to "scale" the Great Firewall and cross the virtual border to use Twitter gives Chinese-language Twitter activism its transnational character.

China's first microblog service, a clone of Twitter called fanfou.com, was launched in May 2007, but was closed in 2009 due to the political nature of much of its discourse. In the meantime, China's largest portal site Sina launched its microblogging service in August 2009. Following Sina, major commercial portal sites like Sohu, Netease, and Tencent, as well as official websites like people.com.cn affiliated with *People's Daily*, all launched microblogging services one after another. Since its launching, Sina's microblog has become the most popular among Chinese microblogging services. Its No. 1 blogger, the TV and movie star Yao Chen, had over five million followers as of February 2011.[7]

Like other domestic internet services, microblogs are censored for subversive contents. Discussions about politically sensitive issues may be censored, although besides a few well-known cases (such as the 1989 student protests), there are no clear and fixed rules about exactly which topics are off limits. Sina deliberately promotes its microblog as a platform for sharing personal feelings, a place of "tender warmth" (*wenqing*). To sell this idea, Sina coined a new term, *weibo*, literally meaning "scarf," to describe its microblogging service. A homonym for "microblog," "scarf" denotes warmth and intimacy. The idea caught on and "weibo" soon became a nickname for microblogs. The domain name of Sina's official microblog site is now weibo.com.

Activists of various types populate the Chinese microblogosphere, but are constrained by censorship practices. Even so, the Chinese microblogosphere still produces large volumes of contentious discourse. In Chinese politics, there are multiple issues with a clear hierarchy and the state is more tolerant of some issues than others. Thus popular contention faces issue-specific political opportunities.[8] Issues that directly challenge the legitimacy of the party-state are minimally tolerated. Conversely, issues that do not challenge state legitimacy may be tolerated. Issues related to Falun Gong, June Fourth, and independent political party formation rarely enter public discussion; they are strictly censored.

Political issues like these, however, are common topics among Chinese-language users of Twitter. Although Twitter is blocked in China, barred outside the Great Firewall of Chinese internet censorship, it still has many users there. According to Twitbase.com, a website that tracked Chinese-language Twitter activity, there were 85,541 Chinese-language Twitterers as of November 11 2010. A look at the top 100 Chinese-language Twitterers by page rank listed on Twitbase.com shows the following categories (Table 14.1):

Table 14.1 Types of Chinese-language users of Twitter

Blogger-activists in China	33
Chinese activists in exile	2
Chinese journalists	1
Hong Kong journalists	2
International news agencies (BBC-Chinese)	2
Liberal-oriented Chinese news agencies (Caixin, and Southern Weekend)	3
IT entrepreneurs/analysts	2
Chinese celebrity	1
Chinese media scholar	1
Internet magazines	2
Unknown	51
Total	**100**

Source: Author's classification based on data from Twitbase, November 11, 2010.

Much of the Chinese-language discourse on Twitter is nothing short of subversive. Influential events and topics of discussion in 2010 include:

- Twitter chats with Dalai Lama
- petition to award the Nobel Peace prize to Liu Xiaobo
- artist-activist Ai Weiwei's repeated efforts to challenge state policing by organizing public dinner parties through Twitter
- numerous petitions in support of harassed or arrested human rights activists in China
- Zhao Lianhai's Twitter campaign on behalf of families victimized by melamine-contaminated milk powder.

Chinese-language Twitter activists are linked to one another through the Twitter follower function. Their online interactions suggest that many of them know one another offline. They hold offline activities too. Yet Twitter activism is not the traditional type. It is not an organized social movement with clear and specific objectives or a leadership structure. Rather, it is more like a permanent but unstable media campaign with vague and diffuse goals. What binds the activists together is a culture of political opposition.

Compared with the numerous users of microblogging services inside China, Twitter's Chinese users are small in number. Yet they enjoy high visibility. They have large followings. The top-ranked person on the top 100 list mentioned above has 62,636 followers; the 100th on the list has 7,407.[9] They are also active users tirelessly tweeting and re-tweeting information. The top ten on the list have an average of 16,809 tweets, with a median of 11,556. Some of them are on Chinese microblogs too, where they have similarly large followings. Moreover, there are many foreign journalists among their followers, who may take their stories to mainstream Western media and thus expand their influence. Finally, from the reports of offline meetings that often

appear in their tweets, it is clear that these Twitterers are well-connected with one another, both online and offline.

Patrolling the virtual borders

How and why does the Chinese state control its virtual borders? What does the "Great Firewall" look like? How does it work?

What is commonly referred to as the Great Firewall consists of a complex system of control and censorship that has developed alongside Chinese efforts to modernize the nation through the strategy of national informatization. A main component of the "Great Firewall" is the "Golden Shield" project launched in 1998 to protect computer security and function as a firewall against undesirable information.[10] In addition, the "Great Firewall" consists of state agencies involved in the regulation and control of various aspects of the internet. The Ministry of Culture, for example, regulates internet bars and online games. The Ministry of Public Security is charged with safeguarding network security. The Information Office of the State Council and the General Administration of Press and Publication regulate news and publication.

The policies of regulation and control are implemented with technological and human power. These are the main elements of the "Great Firewall." Human power includes not just public security and law enforcement officers, but also website editors and moderators. The technological components include the blocking of IP addresses and domain names and the filtering of key words using computer software. These control measures apply to other digital services such as cell phones and text-messaging.

Current laws and regulations prohibit eleven types of content online.[11] These include "information in violation of laws," as well as ambiguous types such as "rumors" and "information that damages the credibility of state organs," and "information inciting illegal assemblies, association, demonstrations, protests, and gatherings that disturb social order."[12] Ambiguous definitions of such prohibited content reflect the ambiguity of the virtual border regions, setting the stage for activists to circumvent, negotiate, and challenge state control.

The "Great Firewall" filters key words and blocks selected websites. For example, the websites of some international human rights organizations are blocked, as well as those run by the Falun Gong movement. Social media sites like Twitter and Facebook are also blocked. The blocking and filtering of foreign websites reflects government anxieties about both speech freedom and internet security. Despite the failures of the media-hyped "Twitter revolutions" in Moldova and Iran, the global discourse about Twitter's role in large-scale mobilizations sounds an alarm to public security authorities in China.[13] The national information security strategies developed by the U.S. State Department under Secretary Hillary Clinton, Google's decision in 2010 to stop censoring its Chinese search engine and reroute it to Hong Kong, and the

intensification of the global discourse on cyber-warfare and internet security are interpreted by Chinese scholars of international relations as signaling the further bundling of internet freedom and cyber-security to national security.[14] The Chinese government's white paper on *The Internet in China* states:

> Internet security is a prerequisite for the sound development and effective utilization of the Internet. Internet security problems are pressing nowadays, and this has become a problem of common concern in all countries. China also faces severe Internet security threats. Effectively protecting Internet security is an important part of China's Internet administration, and an indispensable requirement for protecting state security and the public interest. The Chinese government believes that the Internet is an important infrastructure facility for the nation. Within Chinese territory the Internet is under the jurisdiction of Chinese sovereignty. The Internet sovereignty of China should be respected and protected.[15]

Besides political anxieties, economic considerations may be involved in the Chinese government decision to block social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter. Although government authorities rarely explain why certain sites are blocked beyond general statements about internet security and the prohibition of unlawful online content, a white paper on trade and the free flow of information released by Google on November 15, 2010 points to trade reasons. It argues that the Chinese practice provides "unfair advantage to local companies": "In China, for instance, numerous U.S. Internet services have been kept out or severely restricted, while Chinese versions of the same services have been permitted to operate; and in some cases, the Chinese sites contain their own share of 'offensive' content."[16] A critical political economy analysis of global media industries may view the Chinese practices as a form of local resistance to transnational corporations. The key point for our purposes, however, is that the practices of website blocking have important consequences for online activism.

International political opportunities

The rise of transnational activism has much to do with opportunities and resources in the global arena. Especially when faced with severe domestic challenges, activists look beyond national boundaries for support, hoping to induce boomerang effects on domestic governments.[17] Clifford Bob argues that there is a global market of contention, where local activists and international NGOs are engaged in complex processes of exchange.[18] Focusing on global communication, Monroe Price argues that global state and nonstate actors compete for "loyalties" of their audiences by using regulated communication platforms to organize "a cartel of imagery and identity."[19] In his study of transnational activism, Tarrow defines internationalism as "a dense, triangular

structure of relations among states, nonstate actors, and international institu-
tions" and argues that this complex structure produces opportunities "for
actors to engage in collective action at different levels of this system."[20]

When constrained by the domestic political context, Chinese Twitter acti-
vists take advantage of a favorable international political opportunity structure
to engage in radical transgressive behavior. Three conditions comprise the core
of this opportunity structure. One is the dominance of a global discourse on
human rights,[21] which provides legitimacy to human rights activism around
the world. The second is the expansion of institutional support for human
rights activism. Institutional support includes 1) international institutions and
covenants such as UN human rights treaty bodies and other multi-lateral
organizations; 2) the growing number of international human rights NGOs,[22]
which often provide funding to local human rights activists; 3) the use of
international diplomacy by nation-states to champion human rights activists in
other nations, and 4) international human rights prizes as a mechanism of
promoting human rights causes. Take human rights prizes as an example. An
important mechanism of keeping Chinese human rights issues in the inter-
national spotlight is the awarding of human rights prizes to Chinese activists.
A few random examples include the European Parliament's Sakharov Prize for
Freedom of Thought (given to Hu Jia in 2008), Deutsche Welle's International
Weblog Awards (to Liu Xiaoyuan in 2008), the Courage in Journalism Awards
given by the International Women's Media Foundation (to Tsering Woeser in
2010), the Palmarès prize of the French National Consultative Commission on
Human Rights (to blogger-activist Bei Feng in 2010), and the Nobel Peace
Prize given to imprisoned activist Liu Xiaobo in 2010.

The third condition is the global discourse on freedom of speech and com-
munication rights, including the discourse on internet freedom. In this respect,
government entities and transnational corporations are both influential. The
American government's promotion of internet freedom, for example, entails
support for activists who are pushing the limits of political control in non-
democracies. On January 20 2010, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton made a
widely publicized speech on internet freedom. One day later, the American
embassy in Beijing and the consulates in Guangzhou and Shanghai reached out
to Chinese bloggers by holding a briefing meeting for them via video con-
ferencing and live web cast. Several bloggers cited in the *Wall Street Journal*
blog that was covering the event are on the list of top-ranking Twitterers
I mentioned earlier.[23]

Google's recent policies illustrate how transnational corporations support
internet activism in China. After four years of operation in China and having
suffered attacks on its email system, particularly accounts held by human
rights activists, allegedly from hackers in China, Google announced on
January 12 2010 that it would stop censoring its Chinese search results as
required by the Chinese government and if this was not permitted by the
Chinese, it would suspend its service there.[24] Subsequently, on March 22, 2010,

Google rerouted requests for google.cn to its Hong Kong site, google.com.hk. The Google-China spat generated an intense media discourse about the universal value of internet freedom and boosted the morale of Chinese Twitter activists. Continuing its internet freedom agenda, Google released a white paper on November 15, 2010, titled "Enabling Trade in the Era of Information Technologies: Breaking Down Barriers to the Free Flow of Information."[25] By linking internet freedom to trade and the disruption of free information flows to the violation of international trade rules, Google raises the possibility of using international trade rules as leverage against nations that block information flows on the internet. Whatever the prospect of this new Google policy, it works in favor of Chinese Twitter activists who have to negotiate internet control on a daily basis.

Global media environment

I separate the global media environment from the international political structure to stress the importance of global media in Chinese-language Twitter activism. Social movement scholars have argued that news media and social movements are two complicated systems engaged in transaction. However, much of the existing work focuses on media and social movements in the same nation-state political context. In any nation, democratic or undemocratic, the media systems are more aligned with the dominant political and economic forces than with social movements which tend to challenge political or economic powers. Thus there is a fundamental asymmetry of power between media and social movements that "implies the greater power of the media system."[26]

We should expect this asymmetry of power to change under conditions of global media and transnationalization of activism to the extent that local activists may reach beyond national media for visibility in the global media. By global media, I refer to the network of leading media corporations in the world that have a global reach and impact, such as BBC, CNN, *The New York Times*, and *The Guardian*. The outlets of these media corporations—television, newspapers, magazines, as well as websites—are those typically seen in international airport hubs.

There are still asymmetries of power between domestic activists and global media. In terms of resources, domestic activists are much more dependent. A key difference, however, is an elective affinity between the logic of the global media system and that of local activism. The sub-national and supranational meet half way in shared aspirations and practices of transcending the nation-state.

Because of this elective affinity, global media channels are a hospitable environment for Chinese Twitter activists. They provide generous and sympathetic coverage. The visibility and influence of Chinese Twitter activism would be significantly reduced without the sympathetic coverage of global

media. On November 18, 2010, using the LexisNexus newspaper database, I conducted a key word search for "blogger" in *The New York Times*. I then searched within results for "China." This yielded 86 results. The first of these was published on December 19, 2004, the last on October 31, 2010.

I found that 49 of the 86 articles are stories about China (the other 37 only mentioned China). These 49 stories mention or cite 39 Chinese bloggers by name. Twelve of them are mentioned in more than one story. Five of them are featured. In addition, these 49 stories frequently cite anonymous bloggers as their sources, such as "a blogger," "one liberal Chinese blogger," "a China-based blogger," "a popular Beijing blogger," "bloggers who tread too often into delicate territory," and "an anonymous blogger." Such frequent citations bring international visibility to bloggers. As I will show below, aware of the promise of global visibility through the coverage of global media, Twitter bloggers speak to the global media by often posting messages in both Chinese and English. On Twitter, they follow professionals working for global media agencies as well as foreign journalists and bloggers based in China.[27]

Global media professionals also follow influential Chinese Twitter bloggers. They interact with Chinese Twitter activists and use the Chinese twittersphere for both news clues and news dissemination. Often, Chinese Twitter activists break a news story (such as the closure of an HIV/AIDS NGO I will later discuss) and turn it into news of interest through discussion and re-tweeting. The story soon appears in global media channels and becomes internationally known. Afterwards, the story may be reposted on Twitter, thus speeding up its dissemination. This "Twitter to global media" pattern of circulation is a crucial mechanism of giving visibility to Twitter activists.

"Pushing": Twitter activists as skilled social actors

The central metaphor of Chinese Twitter activism is *tui*, or pushing, which is the first character in the Chinese transliteration of the word Twitter. The metaphor of pushing denotes aggressive action in the face of difficulties and thus well captures the main feature of Chinese Twitter activism. Pushing entails a set of skills, such as knowledge of the technical features of Twitter, as well as an understanding of domestic political constraints and international political opportunities and the global media environment. It symbolizes the techno-creativity of Chinese Twitter activists.

A good Twitter activist is thus a skilled social actor who knows how to negotiate the political constraints and use international opportunities. The forms of Twitter activism reflect the skills and resources of the actors as well as their technological, domestic and international conditions.

The main forms of Twitter activism are "scaling the wall," informing and witnessing, contention, and translation.

"Scaling the wall"

Communication skills are important for activists in all times, past and present. These skills often require the know-how to use communication technologies, from typewriters to mimeograph machines. In the internet age, technical competence, especially the skills to use new digital technologies, becomes especially important. The tool-kit of China's Twitter activists includes first and foremost the skills to "scale the wall," that is, to overcome the barrier of the "Great Firewall" in order to access blocked websites.

There is abundant information online about how to scale the wall. Douban.com, a popular online community in China, supports reading and fan groups of all kinds, and surprisingly, has three groups as of this writing specifically devoted to the discussion of Chinese-language Twitter. Two groups have 2,000 members each and the third has close to 1,400. The discussions in these groups provide useful resources for new Twitter users.

There are also large amounts of information about how to scale the wall in the Chinese blogosphere outside China. One site, for example, carries an article on the basic methods of "scaling the wall." The first method is to use software, and the site carries a few for free downloading. These software packages may be disabled by the Great Firewall too, and thus users need to know how to upgrade to new versions. The second method is using web proxies. In this case, simply type in the URL of a proxy website on the browser and the user will be able to access blocked sites. Some proxies charge an access fee. The third method, considered the most stable, is to use VPN (virtual private network). This method requires more sophisticated computer skills and is rarely free. The last method is through SSH, which the author of the article recommends as both convenient and secure.[28]

Informing and witnessing

Informing refers to the posting and sharing of information and news. Thus in November 2010, when a Chinese blogger won a prize from a human rights organization in France, the news was quickly spread in the Chinese Twittersphere. Another case concerns the forced closing of an HIV/AIDS NGO in Beijing. On November 12, 2010 the head of the NGO sent a Twitter message announcing in both Chinese and English that she is "shutting down a children's AIDS charity she heads due to harassment from tax officials and tightened restrictions. … " This message was re-tweeted many times, and stories about the closure were filed speedily in *The Guardian* and *The Chicago Tribune*, giving it global publicity almost in real time.[29]

When the information posted on Twitter comes from personal witnessing of or involvement in an event, I call it witnessing. The frequent live broadcasting of offline events is a form of witnessing. For example, the candle vigil held in Hong Kong on November 12, 2010 to plead for the release of Liu Xiaobo, the

new Nobel Peace award winner, was broadcast live by Twitterers on the
scene. The tweets on this event are marked with the (hashtag) #lxb. Such live
broadcasting usually is accompanied by digital images of the events being
witnessed.

Contention

Contention refers to claims-making that bears on someone else's interests.[30]
The forms of contention are many. They may be online or offline. Online
forms include petitions, signature campaigns, action alerts, virtual gatherings,
and simple tweeting and re-tweeting. They have a radical and subversive
character, with direct expressions of challenge against the state. The following
tweet contains an example of an online petition: "A Safe World for Women is
campaigning for the release of @wangyi09. Please visit sign the petition http://
is.gd/hwPZQ" (November 21, 2010). An influential online campaign is the use
of Twitter to collect signatures and disseminate Charter 08 at the end of 2008,
a manifesto calling for democratic change in China. The Nobel Peace Prize
winner in 2010 Liu Xiaobo was one of its main authors.

Reflecting their adaptation to domestic political constraints, activists often
challenge state authorities through the art of provocation. This includes orga-
nizing offline forms of contention that border on the permissible and for-
bidden. One of these popular forms is called *fanzui*, or "illegal banqueting." In
May 2010, the artist-activist Ai Weiwei invited Twitter activists in Beijing to
have a dinner banquet and discuss a case of police charges brought against
three internet activists. After the event was cancelled because of police dis-
ruption, Ai travelled down to the city of Hangzhou, where he successfully
organized another "illegal banquet" with about two hundred Twitterers in
attendance. Local police watched the event, but did not disrupt it this time.[31]
"Illegal banqueting" has since become a new form of contention. Provocative
yet not exactly illegal, it is a creative way of testing political limits.

When Twitter activists organize public events offline, they invariably cover
the events on Twitter. In fact, staging an event offline is sometimes a strategic
way of generating a media event, because in the global media age a media
event may have much broader reach and impact than an offline event. Once
covered online, a small offline event may be picked up by global media and its
impact magnified. The adoption of "illegal banqueting" as a new contentious
form may be partly due to the potential coverage of these events on Twitter
and in the global media.

Translation

Few scholars have studied translation as a tactic of global activism, yet trans-
national NGOs and global activists routinely rely on translation to understand
local issues and communicate with local activists. Global Voices, "an

international community of bloggers who report on blogs and citizen media around the world," relies on large numbers of translators "to aggregate, curate, and amplify the global conversation online."[32] Its Project Lingua "amplifies Global Voices stories in languages other than English with the help of volunteer translators."[33]

Translation is never a simple procedure of producing equivalents between languages. It involves selecting materials for translation, understanding the target audience, and choosing vocabulary, tone, and style. As the linguistic politics of apology during the Sino-U.S. "Spy Plane" crisis in 2001 shows,[34] it can be extremely political in international relations. In a sense, then, translation retains some of the features of global framing in transnational activism.[35] A translation is an appropriation and a way of framing.

Chinese Twitter activists use global symbols to appeal to an international audience, directly address international actors, translate local issues for the international audience (Chinese to English translation), and translate global discourse for the Chinese audience (English to Chinese translation).

Thus the most influential Chinese-language Twitter campaigns (such as Charter 08) champion the global causes of freedom and human rights. These are the "master frames" in global social movements and have gained great appeal.[36] Addressing international actors includes direct exchanges on Twitter with Western media professionals based in or outside China, as well as following these professionals on Twitter.

Two-way translation is a common practice among Chinese-language Twitter users. Most tweets by Chinese activists are in Chinese, but some are posted in both Chinese and English versions. English tweets by Western journalists may be re-tweeted with Chinese translations by activists, as in the following example:

> "BBC间谍剧《神出鬼没》得罪中共 RT @xxx:[37] BBC spy drama angers Chinese officials http://bit.ly/d1fctD" (November 2010).

In another example, someone tweeted the news of the closing of an AIDS NGO in two separate messages, one in Chinese and the other in English. The English reads as follows: "Zeng Jinyan closes down AIDS info centre she manages to avoid ongoing harassment from Beijing taxation agents" (November 11, 2010).

Using English instead of Chinese could also be a way of evading local censorship. In November 2010, a blogger tweeted in English on Sina's microblog about the cancellation of the 2010 bloggers conference: "A grassroots bloggers conference to be held in Shanghai has been cancelled after authorities decided it was too sensitive, participants said Saturday, as officials tighten control over social media." He then posted another message in Chinese: "It seems that we should post more messages in English. That will at least invalidate the filtering system. Just don't know whether editors have foreign language

competence to censor" (November 21, 2010, t.sina.com.cn. Author's translation. Twitterer's name is omitted to protect anonymity).

Devoted to translating Western journalism into Chinese is a group of volunteer translators who organize and coordinate their work online. They select and translate China-related articles in the English-language media into Chinese and then disseminate them on Twitter and other internet platforms. According to a cover story in *Technology Review*, which features this group of translators, English-language materials selected for translation are often banned in China, indicating their political nature. The story introduces its leader as a young woman with a pseudonym:

> She leads a confederation of volunteer translators around the world who turn out Mandarin versions of Western journalism and scholarly works that are banned on China's Internet—and that wouldn't be available in Mandarin in any case. That day, working in a communal Google Docs account, she and her fellow volunteers completed translations of texts that ranged from a fresh *New York Times* interview with Google co-founder Sergey Brin to "The Limits of Authoritarian Resilience," a seven-year-old analysis of China's Communist Party from the *Journal of Democracy*.

The story continues with accounts of how this young woman's tweets, as well as her other internet applications, are easily broadcast online despite government censorship:

> What happened when Xiaomi hit "Post" reveals that the government's constraints have their limits. The pieces went live on a blog and a public Google Docs page. These links were broadcast to the nearly 4,000 people who follow her on Twitter (as @xiaomi2020), the 1,170 more who follow her on Google Buzz, and others on five Chinese Twitter clones. Although Blogspot and Twitter are blocked in China to those without circumvention software, anybody in the country can open the Google Docs page—at least for now.[38]

In their efforts to reach an international audience, Twitter activists, indeed Chinese online activists in general, are aided by a new genre of blogs known as "bridge blogs."[39] These are English-language blogs about China produced by foreign individuals or organizations both inside and outside China. The better-known ones inside China include Shanghaiist (http://shanghaiist.com/) and Danwei.org. Outside China, China Digital Times and chinaSMACK are well known. These websites cover current affairs, both political and cultural, and publish English translations of Chinese blogs. Many of these bloggers are on Twitter, where they and Chinese Twitter activists follow and interact with one another. In this sense, these bridge bloggers are themselves participants in the

scene of Chinese-language Twitter activism. Fluent in both Chinese and English, they often tweet in two languages. On November 22, 2010, one bridge blogger tweeted: "CANCELLED: China Blogger Conference! http://fb.me/L2fhTTS6." Several days before, the same blogger tweeted in Chinese: "土豆网上被河蟹的#SHFIRE视频有人放在Youtube上了。快来围观: http://tinyurl.com/27qtduz" (The video #SHFIRE that was harmonized on Tudou has been loaded to YouTube. Hurry to watch it: http://tinyurl.com/27qtduz).[40]

Conclusion

Chinese-language Twitter activists monitor and challenge the center of power from the margins of power. What they witness and report is disseminated in the global communication circuit of mass media and new media. This is perhaps the most important impact of Chinese-language Twitter activism. Such impact is possible due to the combination of three conditions. It has less to do with the thickness or thinness of ties among Twitter activists, and more to do with how activists, individually or networked, can creatively negotiate their local political context, attract global media attention, and take advantage of international political opportunities. This conclusion is not about whether transnational activists may or may not launch a Twitter revolution, but about political activism as creative negotiation and adaptation in its concrete historical context.

This study has several implications for understanding the dialectics of state power and citizen action in the age of global media. First, it shows that globalization has created favorable conditions for domestic activists to challenge state power. The international political opportunities and the global media environment are manifestations of these global forces. Second, to resist these global forces, the state is compelled to erect new boundaries or mend old borders that are under erosion. China's Great Firewall is such a boundary.

Third, new boundaries are designed to counter the forces of internal and external challenges by creating divisions in a world of networked connectivity. The blocking of Twitter in China creates such a division. By limiting access to the global networks, the division limits the inflow of subversive ideas and practices.

Yet, fourth, as my case study shows, the boundaries are porous and may be easily transgressed. Through translation, contention, and informing and witnessing, Chinese-language Twitter activists gain visibility in the global media, thus magnifying their political impact.

In the global era, new information and communication technologies have become a central field of political struggle.[41] Many argue that new media technologies help activists to overcome temporal and geographical barriers to mobilize support from distant others. Recent works present more complex and nuanced pictures of the communicative practices of transnational activists.[42] The strange case of Twitter in China shows how local activists cross virtual

borders to gather in a virtual transnational space to wage local struggles. It points to a scenario of endless negotiation between state power and its opposing forces, a process that is characterized by both new technologies of power and of transgression and subversion.

Notes

 1 See M. M. Manjikian, "From Global Village to Virtual Battlespace: The Colonizing of the Internet and the Extension of Realpolitik," *International Studies Quarterly* 54 (2010): 381–401.
 2 Min Jiang identifies four types of what she refers to as "spaces of authoritarian deliberation"—namely, "central propaganda spaces, government-regulated commercial spaces, emergent civic spaces, and international deliberative spaces." See Min Jiang, "Authoritarian deliberation on Chinese Internet," *Electronic Journal of Communication* 20, nos. 3 and 4 (2010).
 3 Craig Calhoun, "Tiananmen, Television and the Public Sphere: Internationalization of Culture and the Beijing Spring of 1989," *Public Culture* 2, no. 1 (1989): 54–71. In this respect, the events in China in 1989 resembled the Egyptian revolution in February 2011.
 4 Milton Mueller and Zixiang Tan, *China in the Information Age: Telecommunication and the Dilemma of Reform* (Westport: Praeger, 1997), 12.
 5 http://www.gov.cn/english/2010–06/08/content_1622956_3.htm.
 6 I analyzed activism in some of these virtual spaces in the last chapter of *The Power of the Internet in China: Citizen Activism Online* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).
 7 Yao's followers reached 16 million by January 2012.
 8 On issue-specific opportunities in Chinese online activism, see Yang, *The Power of the Internet in China*, 55–57.
 9 The number of followers is just one of many measures used to rank the impact of Twitterers. Thus a person with a smaller number of followers may have a bigger impact if he or she is stronger in the other measures, such as the number of postings.
10 Greg Walton, "China's Golden Shield: Corporations and the Development of Surveillance Technology in the People's Republic of China," International Centre for Rights and Democracy, 2001. <http://www.ichrdd.ca/english/commdoc/publications/globalization/goldenShieldEng.html>. Other "golden projects" include the Golden Bridge Project, the Golden Card Project and the Golden Gate Project. The Golden Bridge Project, for example, aims to provide a public network of economic information. See Ian Holliday and Ray Yep, "E-government in China," *Public Administration and Development* 25, no. 3 (2005): 239–49.
11 Guobin Yang, *The Power of the Internet in China*, 50.
12 http://www.cnnic.net/html/Dir/1997/12/11/0650.htm.
13 Chi Yangnian, "Internet War Is Becoming a Low-Risk Means of Subversion" (网络战正成为一种低风险的颠覆手段) *Theory Research* (xue lilun), no. 19 (2009): 119–20.
14 Shen Yi, "Cyber Security and the Non-Traditional Facor in Sino-U.S. Relations," (网络安全与中美安全关系中的非传统因素) *International Forum* 12, no. 4 (2010): 44–49.
15 http://www.gov.cn/english/2010–06/08/content_1622956_7.htm. Accessed February 14, 2011.
16 http://googlepublicpolicy.blogspot.com/2010/11/promoting-free-trade-for-internet.html. Accessed February 8, 2011.
17 Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink. *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998).

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19 Monroe Price, "Civil Society and the Global Market for Loyalties," in *Global Civil Society Yearbook 2007/8: Communicative Power and Democracy,* eds. Mary Kaldor, Martin Albrow, Helmut Anheier, Marlies Glasius, and Monroe Price. (London: Sage Press, 2007), 46.

20 Sidney Tarrow, *The New Transnational Activism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 25.

21 Claudia Padovani, Francesca Musiani, and Elena Pavan, "Investigating Evolving Discourses on Human Rights in the Digital Age: Emerging Norms and Policy Challenges," *International Communication Gazette* 72, no. 4–5 (2010): 359–78. Thomas Pegram, "Diffusion Across Political Systems: The Global Spread of National Human Rights Institutions," *Human Rights Quarterly* 32, no. 3 (2010): 729–60.

22 Kiyoteru Tsutsui and Christine Min Wotipka, "Global Civil Society and the International Human Rights Movement: Citizen Participation in Human Rights International Nongovernmental Organizations," *Social Forces* 83, no. 2 (2004): 587–620.

23 Sky Canaves and Juliet Ye, "Chinese Bloggers Briefed on Clinton Speech," *China Real Time Report*, January 22, 2010 http://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/2010/01/22/chinese-bloggers-briefed-on-clinton-speech/.

24 http://googleblog.blogspot.com/2010/01/new-approach-to-china.html.

25 http://googlepublicpolicy.blogspot.com/2010/11/promoting-free-trade-for-internet.html.

26 W. A. Gamson and G. Wolfsfeld, "Movement and Media as Interacting Systems," *AAPSS* 528 (1993): 116.

27 To follow someone on Twitter is to subscribe to his or her tweets. A follower automatically receives the messages tweeted by the person being followed. Popular Twitterers have thousands of followers.

28 http://www.chinagfw.org/2010/05/blog-post_4483.html

29 "China AIDS Group Announces Closure after Tax Authority Pressure," *The Guardian*, November 11, 2010. http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/nov/11/china-aids-group-closure-tax. Accessed February 9, 2011.

30 Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow, *Contentious Politics* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2006), 216.

31 Xu Hui, "The Symbolic Association of Grass Mud Horse." http://chinadigitaltimes.net/2010/05/xu-hui-%E8%AE%B8%E6%99%96-twitter-the-symbolic-association-of-grass-mud-horses/.

32 http://globalvoicesonline.org/about/.

33 http://globalvoicesonline.org/lingua/.

34 Kevin Avruch and Zheng Wang provide a detailed analysis of the Sino-U.S. diplomacy over the translation of the Chinese term *daoqian* (apologize) during the crisis. See their "Culture, Apology, and International Negotiation: The Case of the Sino-U.S. 'Spy Plane' Crisis." *International Negotiation* 10, no. 2 (2005): 337–54.

35 Tarrow defines global framing in transnational activism as the "use of external symbols to orient local or national claims." See Tarrow, *New Transnational Activism*, 60.

36 Padovani, Musiani, and Pavan, "Investigating Evolving Discourses on Human Rights in the Digital Age."

37 I have omitted the name of the Twitter user and the date to protect anonymity.

38 http://www.technologyreview.com/web/25032/.

39 On bridge blogs about China, see Rebecca MacKinnon, "Blogs and China correspondence: Lessons about Global Information Flows." *Chinese Journal of Communication* 1, issue 2 (2008): 242–57.

40 "Harmonize" is a new coinage by Chinese internet activists to mean "censored" or "closed down." It is a mocking use of the Chinese official slogan of building a "harmonious society." Tudou is a YouTube-like Chinese website.

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