

Journalism and Globalisation: Paradigms, Problems, Prospects

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Media and journalism scholars more or less agree that journalism can be understood both as expressions of globalisation and as the forces that drive it forward [1–5]. However, due to the breadth and multidimensionality of issues that have been connected to globalisation, it is hard, if not impossible, to give an exhaustive definition of the word and grasp the nature of changes implied for journalism, although attempts have been made in this regard [4,6–9]. At the same time, the processes of globalisation have generated a vast literature – ranging from those supporting its prospects in political, economic and cultural life [10,11], through others who are concerned with the realities of globalization [12,13], to authors who proclaim that the implications suggested by the globalisation theories are a “myth” [14]. Since the term globalisation is often used “widely and loosely” [15] the challenge is to widen and deepen the conceptual base of journalism thinking and investigating in a “global-minded” manner, suggests Ward [16]. In this context, it appears crucial to reconsider the processes of globalisation in the interests of more comprehensive research into the tensions between continuity and change in contemporary journalism, and to elaborate the globalised nature of news in order to develop a conceptual tool-kit for theoretical and empirical explorations of global trends in journalism and their local manifestations. Thus, this text emphasises the complexities of globalisation processes by surveying existing paradigms in media and journalism research, and calls for an abundance of universalistic and reductionist approaches in investigations into global trends in different phenomena, such as journalism, news, and newswork. In this respect, the author develops a rather dialectical understanding of globalisation and sees it as a tension between the particularistic and the common, where universal (globalising) and particular (domesticating) elements reciprocally coexist among different actors and perform in transactions of a social, political, economic and cultural nature across locales.

Although the notion of globalisation is used so frequently that it engenders a certain amount of weariness, as Ampuja [4] writes, it is of importance in contemporary media and journalism theory. This importance lies in the dual meaning that the term possesses: it is not only used as a descriptive term in discussions about changes in journalism, it has also become a conceptual framework for explaining the changing nature of journalism, news and newswork [14–21]. Globalisation, writes Splichal [22], denotes the formation of a global system composed of a variety of combinations among national, international and transnational institutions, corporations, associations, individuals and other groupings, and refers broadly to the increased complexity and interdependency of societies due to all kinds of transactions across national borders, enabled by information, communication and transportation technologies “but not simply triggered by them” [22]. From this perspective, what can be understood as the emerging global is embedded in many settings, which makes theorising more challenging and expands the variety of, for instance, what journalism is, how and why news is made, and under what conditions journalists work. Furthermore, over the last two decades, media and journalism studies witnessed what Curran and Park [1] call “the boom of globalization theory” – with conceptual problems rooted in the past and without clear boundaries between different existing approaches to journalism and the perspectives of globalisation.

The former have its origins in one of the most influential books of the

field, titled *Four Theories of the Press* [23], which became a landmark study of journalism through broader societal prisms for the next forty years [1], but, over the last decade or so, has been widely accused of theoretical shallowness and unsubstantial conceptual uniformity in its generalisations on media, society and cross-national dynamics [15]. About a decade later, the geopolitical approach in debates on communication and worldwide change was accompanied by the modernisation perspective, contributing to the transition from “tradition” to “modernity” by downplaying access, pluralism and locality in media [24–25]. From the late 1960s and early 1970s onwards, acknowledge Curran and Park [1], the media imperialism thesis emerged and “dethroned modernization theory” by promoting the ideas that the “modernization” of developing countries is an expression of the exploitative system of global economic relations and that American capitalist values and interests erode local culture in a process of global homogenisation [26]. Since the 1980s and 1990s, the centralised dynamics of change across local boundaries, facilitated by fuzzy concepts of Americanisation or Westernisation, have been criticised by the counterargument that global flows are “multidirectional” and that the simple image of Western political, economic and cultural domination obscures the complexity, reciprocity and unevenness of its interaction between local and global [27–29]. Furthermore, Curran and Park [1] warn contemporary scholars that identifying characteristics that cut across the boundaries of geography, culture, language, society, region, race and ethnicity appear as simplistic universalist and uniformist perspectives, which have been overcome in recent investigations on journalism globalization – at least to a degree [1,3,4,15,16].

In contemporary critical media and journalism studies, different paradigms of globalisation have emerged, which point at various ways of understanding social reality, different approaches to the notion of change, and distinct conceptions of how globalisation works, what its constituent elements are, and what its implications are. From literature review, three paradigms can be identified within media and globalisation discussions [3–5,15,30]: media-technological, cultural and political-economic paradigms. Since the boundaries between different approaches to journalism and globalisation are blurred, these paradigms do not exhaust the debate – they represent only the main trends and dynamics.

First, the media-technological paradigm argues that the development of media and communication technologies, most notably the internet, has led to deterritorialisation, weakening the ties of culture and space, as well as to a changed experience of time and space [31–

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33]. In this regard, writes Reese [3], the reach, interconnectedness and real-time properties of global journalism contribute to experiencing the world as a whole, shaping the intensity of that experience and the nature of political, economic and cultural life. The media-technological paradigm produces a rather progressive understanding of technology, and neglects the process of internalisation of technology in the practice of journalism, shaping the understanding of journalists' roles and newswork relations and modes of news making. The debates on transnational news and the global news arena [14, 30] do not refer to local, national or regional boundaries in their elaborations, but these do, however, appear central in discussions on "the global public sphere" [34]. In the media-technological view, which neglects the local nature of these changes and the processes of "domestication" [17], journalism operates with similar technology, access, reach and need for timely transmission, and produces universalistic political, economic and cultural implications for journalism even across media organisations operating in vastly different national contexts [3], as well as, for the concepts of democracy and participation, delivering utopian and dystopian visions of the political and cultural nature of the future.

Second, the cultural paradigm of media and globalisation moves away from technological progress, stressing that global media and cultural flows are multidirectional within the processes in which the relations between the local and the global are being restructured and reorganized [35-38]. Through this prism, the globalisation of media and journalism is not leading to homogenisation of global culture but rather "glocalization", "hybridization" and "ecumenization" [4]. In this sense, shared common norms and values are being adopted worldwide, such as public service, objectivity, autonomy, immediacy and ethics [3], framing what Deuze [6] calls the "professional ideology of journalism and journalists". In this context, Schudson [37] writes that globalisation "is not necessarily a mysterious process", suggesting that media models and patterns of journalism are directly borrowed on the basis of broader dynamism in the relations of power, democracy and the media. Similarly, the meaning of news is also "glocally" shaped in this regard, based on the prevailing idealistic conception of reality, carrying objectification into the processes of journalism. Within these horizontal and vertical cultural dynamics, the question of to what extent do journalists (and their readers, listeners and viewers) take on any sense of coherent global identification, adopting more cosmopolitan, pluralistic and universal values, is given little to no attention in contemporary media and journalism studies [3].

Third, the political-economic paradigm centres on the economy as the prime mover of structural change, where the most important interconnected processes are, first, the concentration of power in the hands of multinational media corporations, and second, the deregulation of media systems throughout the world [32,40]. For critical political economists, the essential feature of globalisation and the media is the commodification of culture throughout the world with the help of multinational media corporations as "the new missionaries of global capitalism" [28], and not the global homogenisation of culture and politics within increasingly deregulated media systems [4]. In the political-economic view, journalism has consequently started to navigate increasingly between its "vertical" orientation, aligned with its host nation state, and a "horizontal" perspective mimicking broader political-economic solutions, importantly shaping culture and significantly affecting societal life [3]. Within such shifting orientations of power in the media environment, it appears that media around the world have started to mimic what Hallin and Mancini [29] name the "liberal media model", grounded in Western-style democracy and market economies. Despite the many critics of this observation stressing the contemporary trans-

formations of the liberal model itself [39], there seem to be many indications of a growing commercialism in journalism, a trend toward the commodification of news, and the diminishing political relevance of newswork [6]. In a political-economic sense, according to Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen [40], news is gathered, assembled and provided for the purposes of politics, trade and pleasure, and directed in its generic form by technology, scientism and the market economy.

All three paradigms within media, journalism and globalisation discussions "involve deterministic elements", as Ampuja [4] would acknowledge. Those who explore the media from the standpoint of media-technological theory predetermine technological change as the primary explanatory factor; cultural theorists position the cultural context as the most important, and political economists hold that economy is the determinant. A review of recent inquiries in debates on the relationship between journalism and internet [6] does not signify the realities that would apply to monistic and reductionist understandings of the journalism-globalisation relationship, whether media-technological, political-economic or cultural, but rather approach the global nature of journalism as a result of the processes, as Cohen et al. [41] would say, "characterized by a tension between the particularistic and the common; the shared world and the divided one; the effort to defend cultural borders and, at the same time, the effort to blur them". In other words, the global consists of interconnected political, economic and cultural commonalities and particularities that are shaped in reciprocal articulations between the global and the local.

On the basis of the paragraphs above the author calls for a non-reductionist approach to the journalism-globalization relationship, suggesting that journalism is defined by a combination of political, economic and cultural forces which – enabled by contemporary information, communication and transportation technologies – do not operate unidirectionally and uniformly, but are rather articulated between the global and the local. Thus, the author develops a rather dialectical understanding of globalisation, and sees it as a tension between the particularistic and the common, where universal (globalising) and particular (domesticating) elements reciprocally coexist among different actors and perform in transactions of a social, political, economic and cultural nature across locales. These connections are contingent, as they can be forged or broken in particular social contexts and as they are manifested in different ways across the globe, due to the different relations of dominance and subordination in connoting, symbolising and evoking the prevailing conception of the world and cooperation among people, shaping journalism, news and newswork. The author calls for a reciprocal understanding of globalisation which responds to all kinds of technologically enabled transactions among people on social, political, economic and cultural matters across once constraining locales that reshape the traditions of journalism's place in political life, the particularities of the social meanings of news, and the specifics of the power-related development of newswork. Such an understanding of the journalism-globalisation relationship parallels the major tendencies at work within the overall changes in late modern society, where concepts such as heterogeneity, fragmentation, niche-building and individualisation have become normalised, bringing additional contingencies into definition of the social phenomena in question and approaching accompanying processes as research targets. Since contemporary journalism is connected to wider issues in newswork organisation and structure, the logic of news making and the societal roles of journalists emerge "as a consequence of certain social (including technological and economic) developments and it is attached to certain cultural (including political) formations" [42], where globalisation and localisation perform reciprocally in the dynamics between continuity and change. This

reality calls for appropriation in contemporary journalism research that would be oriented towards multidisciplinary, localization and historicisation, which would address the problems of the connections between the divergent processes in late modernity and converging global trends, which are anything but steady, predictable and uniform.

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