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Chapter 2

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Theories of Global Media

Introduction

We have identified in Chapter 1 a set of criteria through which developments in global media can be critically evaluated. These focused upon six issues of: the relationship of media to political, economic, coercive and cultural power; the nature and operation of media markets; developments in media organizations and public policy; the complex relationship between media and culture; the implications of new media technologies; and the spatial dimensions of global media. In Chapter 2, there will be an analysis of where different theories of the global media sit in terms of these criteria. The first part of the chapter will focus upon two influential academic paradigms for understanding global media: critical political economy and cultural studies. In considering the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches to developing an understanding of contemporary global media, there will also be consideration of some emergent perspectives that shed new light on issues raised from within these paradigms. The four alternative approaches which we will give consideration to are: institutionalism; cultural policy studies; cultural and economic geography; and globalization theories. All of these present questions about whether developments in global media need to be understood, not as an extension of well-established tendencies and hence understandable within existing paradigms of thought, but rather as qualitatively new phenomena which require the elaboration of new concepts and theoretical tools.

Critical Political Economy

Critical political economy has for at least three decades provided the most influential framework through which developments in global media are understood and interpreted. Its origins lay in a critique of mass communications theory as it had developed in the 1950s and 1960s, arguing that these approaches failed to give suitable weight to the significance of questions of power and ideology, particularly how economic, political and symbolic power

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interacted in the sphere of culture. It was argued that there exist economic structures of dominance in the media and communications industries that set limits to the diversity of ideas and opinions in circulation through the media, and that this in turn promotes the circulation of a hegemonic set of ideas, or a 'dominant ideology', among the wider population. This critique of mass communications theory was connected to a rediscovery of the Marxist critique of capitalism, which linked this critique of media in liberal-democratic societies to a wider conceptual understanding of the bases of social order in class-divided societies. Marxism also provided a means by which the fragmentation of knowledge arising from unconnected, discipline-based approaches to academic research could instead be reformulated as more integrated, interdis-ciplinary forms of research and scholarship (see for example, Blackburn, 1972). Political economists place a particular primacy upon the structure of economic relations under capitalism, because structures of domination based upon class relations have been seen as the core element of what both defines a capitalist economy and generates its dynamics, including those of class conflict. Garnham (1995, p. 70) argues that 'political economy sees class – namely, the structure of access to the means of production and the structure of the distri-bution of the economic surplus – as the key to the structure of domination'.

The critical political economy approach to media and communications has developed four principal practices, or 'pillars', that inform research and academic practice in the field (Mosco, 1996; Golding and Murdock, 2000). First, there is the insistence that media research refer to the *social totality*, or the interconnection between systems of economic, political, coercive and symbolic power as they are related to the media sphere. This points to the need for interdisciplinary research and scholarship, and developing connec-tions between media and communications research and a wider set of forces, determinants and social relations. Second, there is the need for a *historical perspective*, or what Golding and Murdock (2000, p. 74) refer to as the '"slow but perceptible rhythms" that characterize the gradually unfolding history of economic formations and systems of rule'. Golding and Murdock (2000, pp. 74–7) identify four historical processes as being central to a polit-ical economy of media: the growth of the media as both an economic sector and a site of cultural influence; the extension of corporate control over the media; the growing commodification of media forms; and the changing nature of government intervention in media industries. Third, critical political econ-omists are concerned with the changing balance between the commercial media industries and the government sector – including public service broad-casters – over time. The question raised here, which will be explored in more detail in later chapters, is whether there has been a symbiotic relationship between media globalization and the moves since the 1980s, classified under the general tag-line of neo-liberalism, to reduce government regulation and to

privatize state-owned enterprises in strategic sectors such as telecommunications and broadcasting. Finally, critical political economists have placed a strong emphasis upon the notion of *praxis*, or a relationship between academic research and practice and the wider contexts in which it seeks influence, that is founded in ethical norms. Golding and Murdock identify 'a communications system as a public space that is open, diverse and accessible ... [as] a basic yardstick against which critical political economy measures the performance of existing systems and formulates alternatives' (Golding and Murdock, 2000, p. 77). The need to develop and present research findings in ways that reflect a wider dialogue with activists and community interests is also indicative of 'a broad conception of professional activity that envisions a wider public than scholars tend to accept' (Mosco, 1996, p. 9).

A fifth element can be added, which is that critical political economy must be *global*, as the insistence upon a global perspective has been central to the development of critical political economy. The exemplar of such an analysis of global media from the perspective of critical political economy was US scholar Herbert Schiller. Schiller argued in his first book, *Mass Communications and American Empire* (Schiller, 1969), that the international movement towards the commercialization of broadcasting was driven by the rise of the US *entertainment, communications and information (ECI) industries*, and that the ascendancy of the ECI industries in the US economy had reached a point where 'nothing less than the viability of the American industrial economy is involved in the movement toward international commercialization of broadcasting' (Schiller, 1969, p. 96). In an argument that remained remarkably constant over a 30–year period, Schiller emphasized three propositions. First, the growth, concentration of ownership and geographical spread of US media and cultural industries, or the ECI sector – as it clearly also included the telecommunications and information technology industries – needed to be viewed alongside broader strategies of United States political, military, economic and foreign policy. Second, the influence of the ECIs is never simply political or economic; these sectors differ from other branches of commercial enterprise through their 'direct, though immeasurable impact on human consciousness', as well as their capacity 'to define and present their own role to the public' (Schiller, 1996, pp. 115, 125). The result is that what Schiller terms 'American pop culture product' has been constructed as the cultural ideal to which people in other parts of the world aspire, resulting in 'the phenomenally successful extension of marketing and consumerism to the world community' (Schiller, 1996, p. 115). Third, Schiller argued that the economic power of the ECI sector, combined with the global reach of cultural commodities and media messages, led to *cultural imperialism*. In *Communication and Cultural Domination*, Schiller defined cultural imperialism in the following terms:

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

In terms of the relationship between media, power and culture, the critical political economy perspective has engaged in two critical dialogues. The first is with liberal-pluralist media theories. In manifestations that vary from the 'modernization' theories popularised in the 1960s (Lerner, 1958; Schramm, 1964) to current thinking about the impact of American 'soft power' as a force for consensus in the global political economy (for example, Nye, 2004), critical political economists have argued that such models have been fundamentally flawed by their exclusion of media and communications research from a broader consideration of structures of economic, political and cultural power (see Mattelart, 1994, pp. 147–64; Thussu, 2006, pp. 42–50 for a summary of these debates).

The second dialogue, and in many respect the more complex one, has been with Marxism. Marxism has at a general level put forward the proposition that the realm of culture and ideas cannot be understood independently of the political and economic forces that shape it and ultimately constrain it. This is why the concept of *ideology* is so central to a Marxist theory of culture. Two key variants of this argument can be found from the work of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. The first, and perhaps the most influential, was developed by Marx in *The German Ideology*:

> The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production ... The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships. (quoted in Barrett, 1991, p. 9)

Perhaps the boldest and most prominent restatement of the 'ruling class = ruling ideology' equation has been in the *propaganda model* of media developed by Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman (Chomsky and Herman, 1988). Chomsky and Herman proposed that the United States media largely functioned through a class-based monopoly of ideas, whereby 'money and power are able to filter out the news fit to print, marginalize dissent, and allow the government and dominant interests to get their messages across to the public' (Chomsky and Herman, 1988, p. 2). For Chomsky and Herman, this has been the result of five 'filters' that impact upon the flow of ideas through the mass media:

(1) the size, concentrated ownership, owner wealth and profit orientation of the dominant media firms; (2) advertising as the primary income source of the mass media; (3) the reliance of the media on information provided by government, business, and 'experts' funded and approved by these primary sources and agents of power; (4) 'flak' as a means of disciplining the media; and (5) 'anti-communism' as a national religion and control mechanism. (Chomsky and Herman, 1988, p. 2)

In a post-Cold War and post-9/11 world, the model would still be seen as valid, with the 'War on Terror' replacing 'anti-communism' as the driver of US government-corporate priorities (see Chomsky, 2001).

The 'ruling class = ruling ideology' or propaganda model sits alongside a second approach, developed in Marx's Introduction to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, where culture and ideology exist as a level in a social formation where economic relations are in a dominant, but not necessarily determinant, relationship to the political and ideological 'levels' through which social relations are largely understood and contested:

> In the social production of their lives, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite form of social consciousness. *The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general.* (quoted in Larrain, 1983, p. 42; emphasis added)

This approach to the relationship between media and power, that sees economic power relations under capitalism as dominant but not determinant, has been the most influential one in critical political economy. Two of its key proponents have been the British political economists Peter Golding and Graham Murdock. Golding and Murdock have stressed how analyses of the relationship between media texts and their audiences need to be framed by both 'an analysis of the way the cultural industries work ... as industries', and an examination of 'the ways in which people's consumption choices are structured by their position in a wider economic formation' (Golding and Murdock, 2000, p. 72). In their overview of the political economy of media, communication and culture, Golding and Murdock propose that there are three factors that set structural limits to the diversity of media forms and representations. In doing so, however, they stress that these are sites of contradiction and contestation, in a world where, in explicit contrast to Chomsky and Herman, 'Owners, advertisers and key political personnel cannot always do as they wish ... [but] operate within structures that constrain as well as

facilitate' (Golding and Murdock, 2000, p. 74). The first is the power relationship between nation-states and corporations, as understood through public and private ownership and the issue of privatization of state-owned assets, as well as changes in the nature and forms of 'pubic interest' regulation of commercial media (cf. Curran and Park, 2000). Second, they argue that dominant economic interests strongly influence, if not necessarily determine, the range and diversity of textual forms available to audiences for interpretation, and that there are structural as well as rhetorical limits to the polysemy of media texts (cf. Condit, 1989; Budd *et al.*, 1990). Third, they draw attention to the extent to which income-based barriers to access to cultural and communications goods and services constitute a reiteration of class divides (cf. Murdock, 2000). This is not only a matter of who can access what – as seen in literature of the 'digital divide' in relation to new media – but is also a question about the range and relevance of 'value-added' media and communication resources to those who are not a part of higher-income demographics (Gandy, 2002). In relation to new media, Dan Schiller (1999) has argued that the rapid expansion of ICT networks worldwide in the 1990s was both cause and consequence of 'a powerful pan-corporate attempt to subject worldwide telecommunications policy to United States-originated, neo-liberal regulatory norms' (Schiller, 1999, p. 40). Readings of the rise of new media in terms of its emancipatory capacity lose sight of the extent to which the development of this 'digital capitalism' in fact reinforces pro-capitalist norms, values and policies on a global scale and – from the perspective of critical political economy – the resultant reinforcement of socio-economic and political inequalities, tendencies towards commercialization, and governance of a wider range of social spheres – ranging from telecommunications to education – under a pro-market, neo-liberal ideology (cf. McChesney and Schiller, 2003).

It is also important to note that some critical political economists argue that the current phase of capitalist development is one where the economic and media/cultural spheres increasingly overlap. A key theorist in this respect has been Nicholas Garnham, although elements of this approach can be identified in the later work of Raymond Williams (1977, 1980), who argued that:

> The major modern communications systems are now so evidently key institutions in advanced capitalist societies that they require the same kind of attention ... that is given to the institutions of industrial production and distribution ... these analyses force theoretical revision of the formula of base and superstructure and of the definition of productive forces, in a social area in which large scale capitalist activity and cultural production are now inseparable. (Williams, 1977, p. 136)

Garnham (1990) argued at a theoretical level that the base/superstructure model and its variants misunderstood Marxism, in conflating the 'material'

with industrial production and the 'ideological' with cultural production. Garnham instead proposed that the key question for a materialist theory of culture was to understand the processes through which cultural forms became 'industrialized', or subject to the general forms and practices of capitalist commodity production. Analogous approaches to understanding the dynamics of commercial cultural industries can be found in the work of Miège (1989) on the relationship between cultural products and cultural work, Ryan's (1992) analysis of the contradictions between creative practice and corporate organization in the cultural sectors, and Hesmondhalgh's (2002) synthesis of this diverse literature into a practical understanding of the economics and sociology of the cultural industries.

The nexus between these themes and approaches is seen in recent work on the political economy of global media. Edward Herman and Robert McChesney's *The Global Media: The New Missionaries of Global Capitalism* (Herman and McChesney, 1997) restated many of the key themes of the cultural imperialism thesis as developed by Herbert Schiller and others in the 1970s, alongside a detailed overview of trends towards media concentration on a global scale that gained particular momentum in the 1980s and 1990s. Herman and McChesney's analysis will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, but they propose that the period from the early 1980s to the present has involved 'a dramatic restructuring of national media industries, along with the emergence of a genuinely global commercial media market' (Herman and McChesney, 1997, p. 1), with the consequences of concentration of media power on a global scale in the hands of a relatively small number of multinational corporations (MNCs), and a thoroughgoing commercialization of media worldwide. They argue that the global media system has become 'an indispensable component of the globalizing market economy as a whole', both because of the significance in the wider economic sense of global investments in the media, communications and information industries (or what Schiller referred to as the 'ECI complex'), but also because 'the global media provide a vital forum for advertisers and the promotion of demand and consumerist values that grease[s] the wheels of the global market' (Herman and McChesney, 1997, p. 189).

Global Hollywood (Miller *et al.*, 2001) is an important contribution to the critical political economy of global media literature, as it seeks to shift debates about global media from the 'cultural imperialism' thesis – and its attendant questions of ideology and influence – towards global production systems, or what Miller *et al.* term the *New International Division of Cultural Labour* (NICL). For Miller *et al.*, what is distinctive about the current phase of globalization of predominantly US-based audiovisual media industries is that they have been structurally separating the 'activities of the hand' – the production of films and television programmes as material artefacts – from the 'activities

of the mind', or the development of ideas, concepts, genres and programme forms. In a mode of thought that is derived from Adam Smith as well as Karl Marx, Miller *et al.* argue that the production process ('activities of the hand') is being progressively globalized in search of lower labour costs and other costs of production, while the generation and ownership of intellectual property ('activities of the mind') that are associated with these new product concepts remain highly centralized. Miller *et al.* propose that the NICL as a concept explains and critically interrogates 'the differentiation of cultural labour, the globalization of labour processes [and] the means by which Hollywood coordinates and defends its authority over cultural labour markets' (Miller *et al.*, 2001, p. 52). The *Global Hollywood* argument developed by Miller *et al.* is distinctive in the critical political economy tradition, in that is not dependent upon the dominant ideology thesis, cultural nationalism, or an effects-based understanding of the media text–audience relationship. In that respect, their work cuts across the grain of many traditional arguments between critical political economy and other perspectives such as cultural studies, and will provide an ongoing touchstone for arguments developed in this book.

Cultural Studies

It is in some respects odd to juxtapose cultural studies to critical political economy as different ways of understanding global media. Both approaches share an understanding of social reality derived from critical theory and the work of cultural theorists such as Raymond Williams, both seek to identify and critique dominant interests in the media and cultural spheres, and both draw upon a range of intellectual resources that arise from the critical dialogue with Marxism that emerged from the rise of the 'New Left' and anti-colonial movements in the 1960s and 1970s. At the same time, however, the two approaches have clearly seen each other as exhibiting a serious lack, as seen in the protracted and sometimes venomous debate between academics representing the two approaches (see for example, Garnham, 1995; Grossberg, 1995; Mosco, 1996; Ferguson and Golding, 1997; Hartley, 2003).

Cultural studies has been particularly concerned with questions of *cultural power*, or the ways in which a multitude of cultural forms are produced, distributed, interpreted and contested through technical means of communication in an era where access to the technologies through which media are distributed is widely spread among populations. Nelson *et al.* (1992, p. 4) have defined cultural studies as 'an interdisciplinary field ... committed to the study of the entire range of a society's arts, beliefs, institutions and commu-

nicative practices'. It has been particularly concerned with the relationship between media, power and culture in modern, mass-mediated societies and cultures. As Stuart Hall observed, 'in twentieth-century advanced capitalism, the media have established a decisive and fundamental leadership in the cultural sphere ... They have progressively *colonized* the cultural and ideological sphere' (Hall, 1977, p. 340).

The differences between cultural studies and critical political economy have frequently revolved around the question of ideology, and the ways in which developments in the economic and cultural spheres are articulated and have mass-popular impact in contemporary societies. Hall argued that cultural studies addressed these question through the concept of *hegemony*, or 'the operation of one class upon another in *shaping and producing consent* (through the selective forms of social knowledge made available) ... [that is] one of the principal kinds of work that the dominant ideologies perform' (Hall, 1977, p. 339). The notion of ideology as hegemony is derived from the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci and, in contrast to the notion of ideology as reflecting the dominance of one class over another, it implies continually shifting power balances between social classes, so that 'the concept allows for the dimension of struggle and opposition, of confrontation between different cultures, where hegemony has to be negotiated and won' (Newbold, 1995b, p. 329). It also acknowledges that culture is never a given totality at any particular place and time as there is the significance of: ideas that do not have a necessary 'class belonging' (for example, nationalism or religious belief); intermediate social classes and groupings with their own values and professional ideologies (for example, intellectuals, state administrators, media professionals); as well as what Raymond Williams (1965) termed 'residual' and 'emergent' forms of cultural practice, that have a complex relationship to the dominant culture of any given historical period.

In an influential series of essays, Hall (1977, 1982, 1986, 1996) developed the concept of hegemony as one that was central to cultural studies as an interdisciplinary and politically engaged field of intellectual practice. For Hall, the concept of hegemony establishes that ideology and culture cannot be thought of as a 'superstructure' that is largely shaped through developments at the level of the economic 'base'. Since ideology is suffused through all aspects of society and social relations through its relationship to language, culture, lived experience and the unconscious, there can be no simple relationship of determination between the economic and the cultural. In other words, ideology is never simply a tool for class dominance through the promotion of erroneous ideas, since:

> Hegemony cannot be sustained by a single, unified 'ruling class' but only by a particular conjunctual alliance of class fractions ... hegemony is not a 'given' and perma-

nent state of affairs, but has to be actively won and *secured* ... there is no *perma-nent* hegemony: it can only be established, and analysed, in concrete historical conjunctures. (Hall, 1977, p. 333, author's emphasis)

Hall also saw hegemony as providing a way forward between the two major conceptions of 'culture' that had been informing cultural studies in the 1970s. These were the British historical tradition that sought to understand culture in terms of lived experience and 'the study of relationship between elements in a whole way of life' (Williams, 1965, quoted in Hall, 1986, p. 36), with its implied agenda of democratizing culture by revaluing the culture of subordinate classes or 'ordinary people'; and the European structuralist tradition, which stressed the influence of the determinant elements of culture upon lived experience, through its structuring into class relations, language and signifying systems. Hall proposed that it was in the relationship between these two elements, which draw attention to the complex terrain that is 'marked out by those strongly coupled but not mutually exclusive concepts culture/ideology', that the concept of hegemony could advance a materialist theory of culture by confronting in different, and sometimes opposed ways, 'the dialectic between conditions and consciousness' (Hall, 1986, p. 48). A central means of developing this understanding of hegemony in Hall's work is through the concept of *articulation*, which refers both to the complex unity formed between different elements in a particular historical conjuncture, and to the role played by discourse in establishing 'common sense' through the ordering and regulation of statements and meanings, as well as the extent to which social conflicts are expressed through language and the 'struggle over meaning' of particular terms and concepts (Hall, 1996). An example of the former notion of articulation could be the relationship between religion and the state in different societies, where it is strongly aligned to class power in some countries, and a source of political opposition in others. An example of the latter is the way in which terms such as 'democracy', 'the people', 'common sense' or 'national identity' have different and contested meanings at different times and in different places (Hall, 1982).

Contemporary mass media have provided rich terrain for analysis and testing of these propositions. At the same time, Hall has been criticized for having 'comparatively little to say about the institutions of mass communication' and lacking 'a detailed appreciation of how the economy and the state shape cultural production' (Stevenson, 1995, pp. 41, 43). There is a political *economy of media* developed within Hall's model of cultural studies through the *encoding/decoding model* of media messages. The process of *encoding* of media texts incorporates the institutional structures of media, organizational cultures and production practices, relations of production, and technical infrastructure, through which a media form, such as a newspaper or a televi-

sion programme, is produced. Through this production process, a media text will have been produced which has encoded within it certain dominant meanings and, in order that the media text is able to reach an audience, it must be meaningful to them, or align itself to audience expectations about what constitutes a media text that they would wish to consume. In the process of receiving the media text, however, the audience engages in a *decoding* of that media text, or a 'reading' of its content that makes it meaningful or pleasurable in the act of consumption or use.

Key studies of media from a cultural studies perspective undertaken in the 1980s and 1990s (for example, Fiske, 1987, 1992; Morley, 1980, 1992; Ang, 1991) focused upon the latter aspect of this framework, differentiating between the 'preferred reading' of a media text, and practices of audience decoding that (i) operate within the 'dominant code' of the text; (ii) 'negotiate' the dominant code; and (iii) make oppositional readings or 'aberrant decodings' which interpret the text within an alternative frame of reference. These audience reading practices are then refracted back into questions of social structure, political orientation, and the capacity for resistance to dominant ideologies, as readings are 'founded on cultural differences embedded within the structure of society – cultural clusters which guide and limit the individual's interpretation of messages' (Morley, 1992, p. 118). For Fiske (1987), what resulted were 'two economies' in mass media – Fiske's particular interest was in broadcast television – as the nature of the cultural commodity means that it circulates within a 'financial economy', whose operations are largely explained by political economy, and a *cultural economy*, where the popularity of media texts is determined through 'the exchange and circulation of ... meanings, pleasures and social identities' (Fiske, 1987, p. 311). This work has been largely discussed in terms of the validity of its political conclusions, particularly the claim that mass popular media constitute a site of resistance to dominant ideologies rather than a site for their reinforcement (see esp. Fiske, 1987, pp. 316–26). What is equally notable, although less commented upon, is the way in which such an approach takes the analysis of the encoding process – the production and circulation of media texts in the financial economy – as largely given by the work of critical political economy. I will return to this point below, in considering the contributions of institutionalism and cultural policy studies to an understanding of media organizations and policy.

A different set of issues for cultural studies arise around whether its frame of reference is essentially national, and how well equipped it is for critical analysis of global media. This point has been raised by Stratton and Ang (1996) who observe how cultural studies emerged historically in response to particular issues emerging in Britain and how they were understood by a generation of cultural theorists,[1] as well as its methodological focus upon the

specific and the conjunctural as the key points from which to understand the relationship between culture and power. Nelson *et al.* (1992, p. 8) define conjunctural analysis as being 'embedded, descriptive, and historically and contextually specific'. Stratton and Ang observe that, in this commitment to grounded, 'bottom-up' research methodologies, there nonetheless remain a given set of disciplinary concepts that have been derived from the British (or, more recently, British and North American) experience that are then applied in other national contexts. The problem is akin to that of the concept of 'society' in sociology, where the governing set of principles are taken as universal, and are then extended outwards to comparative studies of national societies ('American society', 'French society', 'Chinese society' and so on), where 'all these national particulars can be specified and described in terms of the presumably universal concepts and theories of a ... sociological master narrative' (Stratton and Ang, 1996, p. 364). They argue that the approach which emphasizes national cultural studies formations, while partially decentring 'master narratives' derived from the North Atlantic corridor, has the problem of over-emphasising nationalist preoccupations, and generating 'a lack of reflexivity concerning the presumed fit between cultural studies and the nation-state', so that 'the nation-state then becomes ... the taken-for-granted determining context within which particular versions of cultural studies develop' (Stratton and Ang, 1996, p. 380).

A capacity to move beyond the confines of the nation-state is particularly important for cultural studies in relation to media globalization, as media in their most advanced forms are now clearly operating outside of national formations in terms of their financing, production, distribution and reception. At the same time, however, it can be argued that there remain strong localizing and indigenizing tendencies to practices of cultural consumption, which act as a brake on the idea of a globalized and hegemonic mass popular culture. One influential approach to these questions, developed from cultural anthropology more than cultural studies, has been found in the work of Arjun Appadurai. Appadurai has provided conceptual underpinnings for theories of globalization and global culture that point to *cultural hybridization*, rather than cultural domination, as being its *raison d'être*. Appadurai (1990) argued that the global cultural economy was based upon a tension between forces promoting a common global culture (cultural homogenization) and those promoting cultural difference (cultural heterogenization). He proposed that global cultural flows operated across five planes:

1. *ethnoscapes* – movements of people across the world, as tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers, students and so on;
2. *technoscapes* – the movement of complex technologies around the world, and associated capital and skilled labour linked to investment projects;

3. *finanscapes* – the dramatic and unprecedented global movements of financial capital through currency markets, financial institutions, stock exchanges, and commodity markets;

4. *mediascapes* – the global flows of images, narratives, media content and so on through print, broadcast, film and video and, increasingly, the Internet and digital media;

5. *ideoscapes* – the global circulation of ideas, concepts, values and 'keywords', such as democracy, human rights, environmental consciousness and so on.

For Appadurai, what is distinctive about the current phase of global culture is the growing disjuncture between these flows, meaning that 'this new set of global disjunctures is not a simple one-way street in which the terms of global cultural politics are set wholly by ... the vicissitudes of international flows of technology, labor and finance, demanding only a modest modification of existing neo-Marxist models of uneven development and state formation' (Appadurai, 1990, p. 306). In his later work *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Appadurai, 1996), Appadurai developed a more focused account of the cultural elements of global communication and culture, proposing that the central elements which make the current era of globalization a culturally distinctive one are the globalization of electronic media and mass migration.

The emphasis upon mass migration and the lived experience of diasporic communities in multicultural societies allows Appadurai to construct a definition of culture that is based around (i) *situated difference*, or difference in relation to something local, embodied and significant, that (ii) can constitute the basis for a group identity, that (iii) can be mobilized as an articulation of that group identity in other arenas. What follows from such a definition is that cultures constituted as group identities based upon situated difference can engage in cultural politics, or 'the conscious mobilization of cultural differences in the service of a larger national or transnational politics' (Appadurai, 1996, p. 15). Global media flows insert themselves opportunistically into 'this fertile ground of deterritorialization, in which money, commodities and persons are involved in ceaselessly chasing each other around the world' (Appadurai, 1990, p. 303). Appadurai's work has sought to open up spaces from which 'globalization from below' can be understood and, with this, opportunities for the 'subaltern' to 'speak' about the multiplicities of globalization and its cultural impacts, thereby giving greater recognition to the work being undertaken 'from below' by activists around the world on how to renegotiate the terms of entry of these globalizing flows in order to achieve more empowering and democratic outcomes. By contrast, Appadurai argues that speculative theorizing which occurs independently of an understanding of

these local struggles ignores the fact that 'the idea of an international civil society will have no future outside of these efforts to globalize from below ... in the study of these forms lies an obligation to academic research that, if honoured, might make its deliberations more consequential for the poorer 80 per cent of the world ... who are socially and fiscally at risk' (Appadurai, 2003, p. 3).

Institutionalism, Media Corporations and Public Policy

One criticism which can be made of both the critical political economy and cultural studies perspectives is that they have often worked with a fairly rudimentary analysis of the internal dynamics of media organizations. Hesmondhalgh (2002) has made the point that, in the case of critical political economy, this has arguably been more the case in the North American academic literature than in those – principally European – traditions that have been influenced by theories of the cultural industries. Hesmondhalgh argues that a critical political economy of media and cultural industries needs to focus not only upon questions of ownership and market structure, but also upon 'how such issues of market structure affect the *organization* of cultural production and the making of texts at an ordinary, everyday level' (Hesmondhalgh, 2002, p. 34). A capacity to move from the macro-dynamics of global media to questions of industrial organization and organizational culture is thus an important benchmark for the usefulness of theories of global media. In the case of cultural studies, there has sometimes been a tendency to view the production process as largely explained through political economy, in order to focus attention upon the politics of media consumption and use. Fiske's (1987) theory of the progressive possibilities of the cultural economy, for instance, rests very much upon its existence alongside a financial economy of media texts whose operations are largely explained through neo-Marxist political economy.

Institutions have been the dominant organizational form of modern societies. Whether it be the concentration of economic resources into large corporations, the growth of the nation-state as the principal regulator of economic, social and cultural life, or the ways in which we work in organizations, or join unions, guilds or professional associations to declare a common affinity with those in like occupations, institutions have been the central organizational form of capitalist modernity in the 20th and early 21st centuries. March and Olsen (1989, pp. 1–2) have observed that 'Social, political and economic institutions have become larger, considerably more complex and resourceful, and

prima facie more important to collective life. Many of the major actors in modern economic and political systems are formal organizations, and the institutions of law and bureaucracy occupy a dominant role in contemporary life'. Institutions exist both as formal legal entities (such as corporations) and more informal mechanisms for combining individuals and organizing their relationships with others. W. Richard Scott (1995, p. 33) has defined institutions as 'cognitive, normative and regulative structures and activities that provide stability and meaning to social behaviour. Institutions are transported by various carriers – cultures, structures, and routines – and they operate at multiple levels of jurisdiction'. They have a *regulative* element, as mechanisms for setting rules, establishing routines, and offering rewards for compliance (or sanctions for non-compliance). They have a *normative* element, as their durability over time is dependent upon the willingness of those within an institution to accept a set of broadly shared values. As a result, they possess a degree of *path dependency* in their responses to the external environment, shaped by ideas, values and commitments held by key individuals and disseminated through the institution (Hall and Taylor, 1996; Peters, 1999). Finally, institutions have a *cognitive* element, as they confer identities, and provide the conditions through which individuals construct a shared discourse. The anthropologist Mary Douglas (1987) argued that institutions generate the cognitive and discursive conditions for the 'making up' of an individual *persona*, or a sense of social 'self', by framing situations, defining identities, and generating meaning out of a repertoire of available discourses.

A focus upon the importance of institutions as forms that both regulate individual conduct and enable collective action has been characteristic of *institutionalism*, which has a long and often dissident history as a methodology in the social sciences. Institutionalism has presented itself, from quite eclectic perspectives, as providing an alternative way of thinking to methodologies shaped by assumptions about the rational individual, such as neo-classical economics, or overly functionalist interpretations of how the behaviour of individual agents is largely shaped by their positioning in a social structure, as found in some versions of Marxism (Hindess, 1989). Institutionalism gives a central role to the interplay between technology and organizations, the exercise of power in markets, questions of ownership and control, and transformations in institutional behaviour and social organization over historical time (Hodgson, 1988; Stilwell, 2002). For example, Hodgson (1988, p. 208) has described the firm as 'an institution of power' that functions in part as 'a kind of protective enclave from the potentially volatile and sometimes destructive, even ravaging speculation of a competitive market'.

The institutionalist tradition is, by its very nature, a heterogeneous one. Its core elements have been a demand that relations of *power* be recognized in all forms of social theory, but particularly in economic theory (Galbraith, 1973),

and that the *social embeddedness of markets* be given its rightful historical and contemporary significance. The latter concept of a mutually constitutive relationship between institutions and markets has been developed historically in the work of Karl Polanyi (Polanyi, 1944, 1957; cf. Jessop, 2002), who argued that an economy is by definition embedded in institutional and social processes:

> The human economy ... is embedded and enmeshed in institutions, economic and non-economic. The inclusion of the non-economic is vital. For religion or government may be as important to the structuring and functioning of the economy as monetary institutions or the availability of tools and machines themselves that lighten the toil of labour. (Polanyi, 1957, p. 34)

It is important to note that there are differences within institutionalist thought, or what has been referred to as 'weak' and 'strong' institutionalism (Hall and Taylor, 1996; Peters, 1999; Coriat and Dosi, 2002). At the 'weak' end of this spectrum is *rational choice institutionalism*, which understands the development of institutions as rule systems that rational individuals agree to in order to maximize personal benefits to be derived from collective action (Rutherford, 1996). This approach largely draws upon methodological individualism in the social sciences, and upon neo-classical economics in particular, in developing a 'new economics of organization', that emphasizes the importance of property rights, rent-seeking behaviour, and transaction costs to the development of institutions (Williamson, 1985; Hall and Taylor, 1996).

At the 'strong' end, the French 'Regulationist School' of political economists (Aglietta, 1987, 1998; Boyer, 1987, 1988, 1990; Lipietz, 1987) have developed a model of capitalist economic dynamics that links Marxist, institutionalist and macro-historical methodologies. Coriat and Dosi (2002, p. 102) have observed that what the 'Regulationists' refer to as a *regime of accumulation*, a term derived from the Marxist theory of capitalist accumulation grounded in historical time, is based upon six sets of institutional arrangements:

1. the wage-labour nexus (types of employment, systems of governance of industrial conflict, union representation, wage formation and so on);
2. forms of competition in product and service markets;
3. institutions governing financial markets, including share and credit markets;
4. norms of consumption;
5. forms of state intervention in the economy (economic management policies, regulation of conflict, industry development, taxation, welfare, health and education, public good provision and so on);
6. organization of the international system of exchange.

Coriat and Dosi identify regulation theories as a form of 'strong institutionalism' whereby institutions shape the cognitive processes and identities of individuals, where the identification of self-interest is linked to institutional maintenance, and where institutions are the 'carriers of history', whose decisions generate a path dependency in social development over time (Coriat and Dosi, 2002, p. 100).

It was observed in Chapter 1 that the relevance of institutional analysis to the study of global media arises from the centrality of the *corporate form* to media organizations in the 20th and 21st centuries. Five factors presented themselves as being of significance in promoting the increasing enmeshment of media production and distribution within the corporate institutional form:

1. the distinctive legal form of the corporation;
2. the question of who controls the corporation;
3. the growing complexity of corporate institutions and the move towards multidivisional organizational forms;
4. the role of contracts as a means of managing risk and co-ordinating diverse activities;
5. the role of bureaucracy as a means of managing creativity, and challenges to this within the context of creative work.

It was also observed that the corporate form of institutional organization generates particular questions related to policy and governance, and it cannot be assumed that the decisions made by the political institutions of the state simply reflect the structural alignment of forces that exist independently of it. *Historical institutionalists* such as Skocpol (1985) have critiqued the notion that policies are largely determined by the balance of forces and interests that lie outside of state institutions, arguing that 'the formation ... [and] political capacities of interest groups and classes depend in significant measure on the structures and activities of the very states the social actors, in turn, seek to influence' (Skocpol, 1985, p. 27). Such approaches address the problem of what Dunleavy and O'Leary (1987) have termed the *cipher image* of public policy, where policy development is largely seen as the reflection of outcomes already achieved through elite bargaining between powerful corporate and government interests. In such approaches, the institutional specificities of policy formation and implementation are largely erased, and policy outcomes are typically seen as the consequence of structural imperatives derived independently of the policy process. The result is that we are left with 'the uncomfortable inference that the study of state institutions is something of an irrelevance' (Johnston, 1986, p. 69). In a critique of neo-Marxist interpretations of Australian broadcasting policy, that engages with questions of how to best understand the relationship between structure and agency, Pearce (2000)

observed that such accounts 'paid no attention ... to what the many interest groups involved in broadcasting policy *at the time* thought was in their interest', but rather 'assigned interests based on its own external, ideological understandings of the "public interest" and "business interest"' (Pearce, 2000, p. 371).

Pontusson (1995) has observed that institutionalism is commonly understood as a *middle-range theory*, problematizing relationships between agency and structure, or between methodological individualism and various forms of structuralism. The nature of being a 'middle-range' theory in the social sciences raises the question of what analyses outside of this framework it is anchored to. Pontusson argues that institutionalism should be aligned to the macro-social approach associated with critical political economy, in order to develop 'the comparative study of advanced capitalism' (Pontusson, 1995, p. 143). This is akin to Sayer's argument that regulation theory has emerged as 'a middle-range theory or analysis of capitalism which examines the different kinds of social embedding of macro-economic processes' (Sayer, 1995, p. 24), and is reflective of dialogues between institutionalism and Marxism that have taken place within the field of critical political economy (Dugger and Sherman, 1994; Stilwell, 2002).

Rethinking State Capacities: Cultural Policy Studies

State theory has been an important arena for debates between liberal-pluralist and critical theories of global media. There has been in recent years an important rethinking of how to understand state agencies in relation to global media, influenced by institutionalist theories and cultural policy studies. The political economy approach challenged claims arising from liberal-pluralist theory that the state was a *neutral arbiter of competing interests*, instead emphasizing the power and influence of corporate interests over government policy (Miliband, 1973). An important debate occurred within the study of political economy in the 1970s about the role and nature of the state in capitalist societies, where the 'instrumentalist' perspective – which saw the state as acting in the interests of the dominant classes because they possessed the most power and influence under capitalism – was challenged by *structuralist* approaches, which drew attention to the complex and contradictory nature of class interests, competition between competing fractions of capital, and the need for the state to be seen to be 'above' particular interests in order to maintain legitimacy (Poulantzas, 1972; cf. Jessop, 1990). From a political economy perspective, Mosco argues that 'the state has to promote the interests of

capital even as it appears to be the independent arbiter of the wider social or public interest' (Mosco, 1996, p. 92). Kellner (1990) has drawn upon the Gramscian concept of hegemony to argue that this potential contradiction between state strategies to promote private capital accumulation and its need to retain some degree of popular legitimacy is managed in part by 'a logic of exclusion that condemns to silence those voices whose criticisms of the capitalist mode of production go beyond the boundaries allowed by the lords of the media' (Kellner, 1990, p. 9).

These approaches have been critiqued from the perspective of *cultural policy studies* for how they represent the relationship between media power, policy and culture. Tony Bennett, one of the leading theorists of cultural policy studies, has argued the need for a more institutionally grounded approach to understanding cultural forms and practices, which can identify opportunities for cultural politics that can impact upon the conduct of identifiable government agents and institutions (Bennett, 1992a). Bennett's call for a cultural studies that is *useful*, in the sense that it can connect to the discourses and institutional structures of cultural policy formation, has been echoed by cultural studies theorists such as McRobbie (1996), who identified cultural policy as the 'missing agenda' of cultural studies. It was also connected to a wider body of work, associated with Michel Foucault's notion of *governmentality* (Foucault, 1991), which shifted the locus of understanding of government from who controls formal state institutions and structures, towards the micro-politics of *technologies of government* that shape the understanding of political problems and the forms of action that can be directed towards them (cf. Miller and Rose, 1992). Hunter (1988) drew upon such work to argue that cultural studies needed to move towards more historically grounded and institutionally specific forms of engagement with cultural institutions, arguing that 'cultural interests and attributes ... can only be described and assessed relative to ... the actual array of historical institutions in which such attributes are specified and formed' (Hunter, 1988, p. 106).

Bennett (1992a, p. 26) proposed that culture was best thought of as 'a historically specific set of institutionally embedded relations of government in which the forms of thought and conduct of extended populations are targeted for transformation – in part via the extension through the social body of the forms, techniques, and *regimens* of aesthetic and intellectual culture'. For Bennett, this approach linked contemporary cultural policy advocacy to historical analyses of cultural formations in modern societies, by seeing the 'governmentalization' of culture as part of a broader trend towards the use of specific forms of knowledge as technologies for the management of populations. Bennett saw the implications of such a revised analytical framework for the study of cultural institutions as four-fold. First, it would shift the empha-

sis of cultural history away from the ways in which the development of these institutions was understood by cultural critics, towards a more fine-grained institutional analysis of the administrative goals, objectives and outcomes of the organizations themselves (cf. Hunter, 1988). Second, Bennett saw cultural policy, not as an optional add-on to cultural studies, but as rather being 'central to the definition and constitution of culture' (Bennett, 1992b, p. 397). Third, it pointed to cultural studies developing perspectives that would be 'conducted in a manner such that, both in its substance and style, it can be calculated to influence or service the conduct of identifiable agents within the region of culture concerned' (Bennett, 1992a, p. 23). Fourth, this clearly entailed establishing an ongoing dialogue between cultural theorists and what Bennett has termed 'cultural technicians', or cultural policy-makers and administrators (Bennett, 1992b, p. 397). The forms that this would take would vary according to the priorities of the institutions being engaged with and the issues in question, but it clearly meant talking to state agencies and institutions, rather than writing them off in advance as ideological state apparatuses, and then 'in a self-fulfilling prophecy' identifying their policy failures (Bennett, 1992a, p. 32).

Bennett's work, and that of related authors within the emerging field of Australian cultural policy studies (Cunningham, 1992; Hunter, 1994; Mercer, 1994; Bennett, 1995; Meredyth, 1997), has drawn a diverse range of responses. Lewis and Miller (2003) have argued that it is an approach to cultural policy studies that makes more sense in countries such as Britain and Australia, where there is a history of critical intellectuals and local authorities pursuing collaborative projects, than in the United States.[2] In the US, cultural policy studies has emerged out of fields such as cultural economics, which have had a relatively strong and direct connection to questions surrounding the public funding of the arts and cultural institutions (Di Maggio, 1983; Lewis and Miller, 2003). Some writers have endorsed the general aspirations of developing cultural studies in more institutionally oriented and pragmatic directions, while nonetheless questioning this particular approach to cultural policy studies. Miller (1994) observed that one outcome of cultural policy studies emerging out of a dialogue with cultural studies, rather than policy studies as it had developed in the social sciences, was that there was a lack of awareness of issues surrounding the ethics of consultancy, the problem of 'capture' of researchers by clients, and the relationship between policy rhetoric and implementation. McGuigan (1996) also noted that the capacity to advance cultural policy initiatives is also very much dependent upon the nature and priorities of governments, with governments of the left far more likely to be sympathetic than those of the political right. Lewis and Miller (2003) make the point that there is not a polarity between policy studies and critical traditions, as one can undertake policy-oriented analyses of cultural

institutions from a critical perspective, as seen in Streeter's (1995) critique of the institutional framework which governs US broadcast media policy.

These debates are ongoing, and we will identify comparable debates emerging around the concept of creative industries (to be discussed in Chapter 5), which has many connections to cultural policy studies. Two further points could be added at this stage. The first is that, by demanding a more institutionally delineated and context-sensitive understanding of state capacities in the cultural sphere, cultural policy studies has drawn attention to the need to recognize the agency and capacity for independent initiative on the part of policy-makers. This points to the possibilities of what Yeatman (1998) termed *activism in the policy process*, or alliances between activists and policy administrators. The second is that the cultural policy studies perspective remains resolutely national, and in doing so is reflective of both its roots in cultural studies traditions that have tended to be national, and the focus of policy studies upon the nation-state as the primary locus of decision-making. In its focus upon the relationship between cultural policy and the formation of citizenship and citizen identities, to take one example, there remains an implicit assumption that both of these operate at the level of the nation-state. The rise of global media raises the question of the extent to which access to and use of cultural resources associated with the formation of citizen identities is increasingly drawn from transnational rather than national sources, through global audiovisual media and the Internet in particular (Canclini, 2000). It also raises issues concerning the micro-politics of media production, consumption and use, which are best addressed outside of the state-driven approach to understanding these relationships that remains a strong feature of the cultural policy studies approach.

Cultural and Economic Geography

The focus of geography upon the spatial dimensions of social relations, and the spatially grounded dimensions of everyday life and social interaction, provide an important perspective from which to analyse the scope, dimensions and impacts of global media. The perspectives of both cultural and economic geography have been important to understanding the distinctive relations between media, culture and space constructed within and through global media, and in this section the two will be considered together, even though in an analytical sense recent work from economic geographers will inform the analysis of media globalization developed in Chapters 3 and 4, and the significance of cultural geography perspectives will emerge primarily in Chapter 5.

There are two major 'turns' in geography that have been important to understanding the context of contemporary debates. The first, which occurred in the 1970s and is largely contemporaneous with the rise of Marxist political economy and critical theory more broadly, is the critique of positivism and the idea of geography as 'the science of the spatial' (Massey, 1985, p. 11). The observation that spatial relations were *spatial relations under capitalism*, and the resultant need to incorporate elements of the Marxist critique of capitalism – with its focus upon the dynamics of capital accumulation, the social division of labour, uneven development, and class inequality, antagonism and contradiction – generated an enormously productive moment in radical geography (see for example, Castells, 1978; Harvey, 1982; Massey, 1984; Storper and Walker, 1989; Smith, 1990). At the same time, a question that lurked around the finding that spatial relations were formed by broader social relations was whether geography mattered or whether, as Doreen Massey observed, 'geography only comes onto the scene at a later stage of analysis – that it is inherently contingent' (Massey, 1985, p. 18). While radical geographers such as Harvey (1982, 1985), Storper and Walker (1989) and Smith (1990) had sought to reconstruct political economy in explicitly spatial terms – most notably in Harvey's (1982, 1985) identification of the 'spatial fix' as a central mechanism for capital to renew itself, along with technological innovation – the question remained about the distinctive contribution of geography to critical political economy. As Massey (1985, p. 18) observed, 'if we really mean that it is impossible to conceptualise social processes and structures outside their spatial form and spatial implications, then the latter must also be incorporated into our initial formulations and definitions'. Similarly, Soja (1989) argued that the impact of critical geography had been around the reassertion of space in critical social theory.

The second major development in critical geography, which can be broadly dated from the early 1990s onwards, is the 'cultural turn'. The new cultural geography drew upon the post-structuralist critique of representation, proposing that the symbols through which 'reality' is represented could not be taken as straightforward and ideologically neutral reflections of social reality, but were modes of signification that had their own material and ideological effects, and were therefore imbued with, and embedded within, relations of power, domination and resistance (Barnes, 2003; Söderstrom, 2005). Michel Foucault's (1984, p. 252) proposition that 'Space is fundamental in any form of communal life; space is fundamental in any exercise of power', goes beyond the proposition that space matters in understanding social relations and the operations of power, which had been the argument of critical geographers in relation to political economy and critical social theory. For Foucault, it is impossible to conceive of social relations independently of their spatial dimensions:

The present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space. We are in the epoch of simultaneity; we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the side-by-side, of the dispersed. We are at a moment, I believe, when our experience of the world is less that of a long life developing through time, than that of a network that connects points and intersects with its own skein. (Foucault, 1986, p. 22)

From a different but related perspective, Michel de Certeau proposed an explicitly spatial understanding of the operations of power in modern societies, differentiating between *space* as that which is managed and ordered by those with power towards specific strategic ends, and *place* as the site where those without power 'make do' with available resources, seeking to reorganize and reconstruct the spatial strategies of the powerful institutions and individuals towards their own ends (de Certeau, 1984).

Debate about the impact of the 'new cultural geography', the 'cultural turn' in geography and the influence of post-structuralism and postmodernism more generally, has been intense among geographers (for example, Mitchell, 2000; Smith, 2000; Thrift, 2000; Storper, 2001; Barnes, 2003). The most influential critique was that of David Harvey who, after proposing an ambitious reconstruction of Marxist political economy in a geographical frame (Harvey, 1982), undertook in *The Conditions of Postmodernity* (Harvey, 1989) a critical situating of post-structuralist and postmodernist cultural theories in the dynamics of political-economic change in the 1970s and 1980s. Harvey argued that the influence of postmodernism both within and outside of the academy – with close attention paid to postmodernist trends in architecture and urban design – could only be understood in the context of a shift in the dominant modes of capitalist production and consumption away from the 'Fordist' paradigm of mass production and mass consumption, towards transitional modes variously identified as 'flexible accumulation' and 'disorganized capitalism' (cf. Lash and Urry, 1987). For Harvey, the combined forces of 'de-massification' and globalization of both production and consumption were linked to a range of transformations in the relations of people to space and time, that have parallels in the impact of modernity upon time, space and power. The most critical element of this, for Harvey, is that it marks 'the annihilation of space through time' (Harvey, 1989, p. 293) which generates a class of skilled, geographically mobile knowledge workers attuned to the 'time-less' and 'a-spatial' cultural universe proposed by postmodernist cultural theory, and a section of the critical intelligentsia that identifies with this project of global cosmopolitanism. Critical of the rise of both locality-based politics and identity politics, Harvey argued that such 'oppositional movements become a part of the very fragmentation which a mobile capitalism and flexible accumulation can feed upon', and that political action based upon the 'aesthetics of place ... meshes only too well with the idea of spatial

differentiations as lures for a peripatetic capital that values the option of mobility very highly' (Harvey, 1989, p. 303).

Critiques of Harvey's resolute defence of Marxist historical materialism against both locality-based and identity politics have come from both cultural studies (for example, Morris, 1992) and cultural geography (for example, Barnes, 2003). Rather than dwell upon these arguments, we can instead note the extent to which the rise of cultural geography has itself been linked to discourses surrounding the 'culturalization of the economy', or the degree to which the 'cultural turn' in economic geography has meant that 'we can never look at "the economic" in quite the same way' (Gertler, 2003a, p. 132; cf. Thrift, 2000).

The extent to which the contemporary global capitalist economy has been 'culturalized' has been a widely debated proposition (see, for example, Amin and Thrift, 2004). Lash and Urry (1994) argued that the interaction between the 'semiotization of consumption' and flexible production systems, and the permeation of production models with their origins in the cultural and creative industries, has meant that 'ordinary manufacturing is becoming more and more like the production of culture ... It is not that commodity manufacture provides the template, and culture follows, but that the culture industries themselves have provided the template' (Lash and Urry, 1994, p. 123). Gertler (2003a) has proposed that a cultural economic geography of production draws upon three 'big ideas' that have gained common currency over the 1990s and 2000s:

1. the 'rediscovery of the social' in production, and the associated relationship between organizational culture and economic performance (cf. Clegg *et al.*, 2005);
2. the realization that knowledge and learning are interrelated, and that the most advanced forms of learning in relation to product forms are embedded in geographically specific urban and regional cultures;
3. the evolutionary dynamics of local production systems and the cumulative advantages that derive from the combination of institutional 'lock-in' and 'first mover' advantage (cf. Arthur, 1999).

From a cultural studies perspective, du Gay and Pryke (2002) have identified the 'cultural economy' as arising from:

1. arguments that the management of culture has become the key to improving organizational performance, particularly when it can align organizational goals to feelings of self-realization among those working within it;
2. the relationship between economic processes and their cultural dimension, particularly in the services sector, where economic transactions are more directly related to interpersonal relations and communicative practices;

3. the rise of the cultural or creative industries, and the adoption of practices throughout the economy that have their genesis in these industries, such as the role of cultural intermediaries in articulating design and production to the desires and values of consumers, or the role of networks in time-based and project-based forms of production.

Academic work derived from cultural and economic geography can lead to quite divergent conclusions on the nature and significance of globalization. While some geographers have drawn attention to the centrality of globalizing forces to reconstructing the geography of cities and regions (Dicken, 2003a, 2003b), others have used a geographical understanding to draw attention to the spatial limits of globalization theories (Cox, 1997; Yeung, 2002). Amin has argued that 'the distinctive contribution of ... [geography] within the congested study of globalization [lies] in the study of the spatiality – social, economic, cultural and political – of what is increasingly being seen as a single and interdependent world' (Amin, 2001, p. 6276). In particular, both cultural and economic geography question theories of globalization in their *strong* form – to be discussed below – by drawing attention to the ongoing significance of *interscalar* relationships, or the mutual interaction between the local, the national, the regional and the global (Peck, 2002). Amin has questioned the idea that globalization involves, for better or worse, a 'shift in the balance of power between different spatial scales' (Amin, 2002, p. 395), questioning claims that globalization marks the triumph of global networks over local places, or globalizing capitalism over nation-states, or the source of a conflict between global cosmopolitanism and local identities, but rather proposing that the forces of globalization point towards 'a combination of multiple spatialities of organization and praxis as action and belonging at a distance become possible' (Amin, 2002, p. 395).

Theories of 'Strong Globalization' and their Critics

The final theoretical perspectives to be considered in relation to global media are theories of *strong globalization*. By this, I refer to those theories which argue that the process of globalization has marked a shift in the economic, political and cultural dynamics of societies that is of such a scale that the analytical tools by which we understand social processes in the 21st century are fundamentally different to those which were applicable to 20th-century societies. I have elsewhere (Flew and McElhinney, 2005) referred to these as theories which propose that the interrelated trends associated with

globalization have marked a *qualitative* shift in the pattern of economic, social, political and cultural relations within and between states and societies, rather than a series of extensions and intensifications of more long-standing trends, that is, part of a *quantitative* change. Examples of 'strong globalization' theories can be found in economics, sociology, political theory and cultural studies (examples include Urry, 1989; Robertson, 1991; Reich, 1992; Ohmae, 1995; Waters, 1995; Shaw, 1997; Modelski, 2000). What I wish to do here is to critically appraise the work of sociologist Manuel Castells and the academics/political activists Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri as authors who propose that globalization has marked a substantive shift in the economics, politics and cultures of the 21st century, and consider some critiques of 'strong globalization' in light of the preceding work in this chapter.

In his major three-volume work *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture* (Castells, 1996, 1998, 2000a), Manuel Castells has proposed that a *new economy has* emerged since the 1980s that is global, networked, and informational. While this new techno-economic framework remains capitalist in form, it is based upon what Castells describes as an *informational rather than an industrial mode of development*, where the major sources of productivity arise not from the application of social labour, but rather from the application of information technology, and 'the technology of knowledge generation, information processing, and symbol communication' that promote 'the action of knowledge upon knowledge itself as the main source of productivity' (Castells, 1996, p. 17). At the centre of the informational mode of development are networks, and Castells has termed the emergent social structure a *network society*:

> Networks constitute the new social morphology of our societies, and the diffusion of networking logic substantially modifies the operation and outcomes in processes of production, experience, power, and culture. While the networking form of social organization has existed in other times and spaces, the new information technology paradigm provides the material basis for its pervasive expansion throughout the entire social structure. (Castells, 1996, p. 469)

Castells has proposed that the rise of a network society is linked to a new regime of accumulation, or production-consumption nexus, that he terms the *information technology paradigm*, where information, networking, flexibility and convergence are inherent outcomes of the pervasive impacts of new ICTs upon all aspects of economy, politics, society and culture. Castells' metaphor of the network as the core element of the information technology paradigm is developed in explicit contrast to theories of 'Fordism', or the technological and economic systems of mass production and mass consumption, as the

central metaphor of industrial society (Harvey, 1989). The new economy that is based on ICTs has three fundamental characteristics. First, it is *informational*, in the sense that 'the capacity of generating knowledge and processing/managing information determine the productivity and competitiveness of all kinds of economic units, be they firms, regions, or countries' (Castells, 2000b, p. 10). Second, it is *global*, since 'its core strategic activities have the capacity to work as a unit on a planetary scale in real time or chosen time' (Castells, 2000b, p. 10). Finally, the new economy is *networked*. It is based upon information networks such as the Internet, as well as the networked enterprise becoming the dominant form of economic organization, at whose heart is no longer the capitalist firm, but global financial markets and business projects based upon short-term strategic alliances and partnerships. For Castells, the networked enterprise is a logical corollary of electronic business, as it is based around 'the Internet-based, interactive, networked connection between producers, consumers, and service providers' (Castells, 2001, p. 75).

The corollary of a network society, and a new economy based on information, globalization, and networking, is that power is increasingly organized around the *space of flows*. These are constituted in three ways. First, they are constructed electronically through the *communications networks* themselves, and spatially through the rise of *global cities* as centres of commerce and communications. Second, *technopoles* such as Silicon Valley in California, Bangalore in India, Guangzhou Province in China, and Malaysia's Multimedia Super Corridor, provide examples of how the global space of flows is constructed through its 'nodes and hubs', and how nation-states increasingly compete to establish locations within their territorial domain as central points in this global network. Finally, for Castells, the global space of flows is constituted *culturally*, through the shared experiences and practices of geographically mobile managerial and knowledge workers, elites who, while still predominantly North American and European, are increasingly deracinated, with the rise of global elites from Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and Africa, and the increasingly multicultural nature of the metropolitan centres (Castells, 1996, pp. 410–18).

A particularly marked feature of Castells' analysis of the Information Age and the network society is the sharpness of the distinction he makes between the deterritorialized spaces through which networks of information, power, cultural forms and economic transactions flow, and the places of work, cultural experience, historical memory and everyday life. For Castells, 'the space of flows of the Information Age dominates the space of places of people's cultures', with the result being that 'the network society disembodies social relationships ... because it is made up of networks of production, power, and experience, which construct a culture of virtuality in the global flows that transcend time and space' (Castells, 2000a, pp. 369, 370). This is

in contrast to the experience of modernity in the Industrial Age where 'spatio-temporal configurations were critical for the meaning of each culture and for their differential evolution' (Castells, 2000a, p. 370). Many implications follow from this in Castells' analysis, but three are particularly relevant to the study of global media. The first is that, in the Information Age, national societies are increasingly divided by a new form of class-based social cleavage, between geographically mobile workers dealing with information and symbolic communication, whose skills are highly sought after across the globe, and 'generic labour', that is particularly vulnerable to the movement of jobs offshore as a consequence of globalization and technological change. Second, Castells views the global proliferation of new forms of information and entertainment through digitally networked ICTs as meaning the 'end of mass media', and hence of the association of nationally based media with the development of national cultures. Finally, the global space of flows erodes the significance of a variety of forms of historically based and locally grounded forms of culture, to the extent that – for an ever-growing segment of the global population – their experience of culture is grounded less in a sense of place than it is by a desire on the part of a variety of social agents (corporations, governments, non-government organizations, cultural activists, and so on) to locate themselves within global networks, and to 'reinvent' institutions, traditions and places in order to more effectively do so.

In *Empire* (Hardt and Negri, 2000) and *Multitude* (Hardt and Negri, 2005), the US critical academic Michael Hardt and the Italian Marxist academic and political activist Antonio Negri have developed the proposition that Empire is the new form of imperialism in an age of globalization. They argue that sovereignty in relation to management of a global capitalist system has been selectively transferred from nation-states to a network of national and supranational entities 'united under a single form of rule ... [which] is what we call Empire' (Hardt and Negri, 2000, p. xii). Hardt and Negri argue that Empire is 'a *decentred* and *deterritorializing* apparatus of rule that ... manages hybrid identities, flexible hierarchies, and plural exchanges through modulating networks of command' (Hardt and Negri, 2000, pp. xii–xiii; authors' emphasis). For Hardt and Negri, the current phase of global capitalism is one where 'large transnational corporations have effectively surpassed the jurisdiction and authority of nation-states', to the point where 'government and politics come to be completely integrated into the system of transnational command' (Hardt and Negri, 2000, pp. 306, 307). They identify Empire as a regime for the management of populations on a global scale, that can encompass the social totality, which includes the populations of nations seen as dominating as well as those seen as dominated, that not only manages territories and populations, but the very social world that its subjects inhabit (Hardt and Negri, 2000, pp. xiv–xv).

Multitude (Hardt and Negri, 2005) is the companion volume to *Empire*, where Hardt and Negri address the question of whether they see the power of Empire to be so all-encompassing as to negate effective resistance. They instead argue that Empire produces the possibility, for the first time in human history, of global democracy. This occurs not only because globalization weakens the power of nation-states and claims to territorial sovereignty, but because the maintenance of Empire as an economic system depends upon more and more of the global population as producers, consumers, users and participants in its global network of production. Moreover, production is no longer simply economic production, or the production of material goods, but *social* production, or 'the production of communications, relationships and forms of life' (Hardt and Negri, 2005, p. xv). As a result, it creates the *multitude* as 'the living alternative that grows within Empire' (Hardt and Negri, 2005, p. xiii), that is infinitely diverse as a population, but has a capacity to act collectively as a result of the globally networked nature of social production, and the fluid, open and collaborative network form provides its primary means of acting politically. For Hardt and Negri, 'the creation of the multitude, its innovation in networks, and its decision-making ability in common make democracy possible for the first time today', and the weakening of sovereignty by globalization and Empire means that 'the autonomy of the multitude and its capacities for economic, political and social self-organization take away any role for sovereignty ... When the multitude is finally able to rule itself, democracy becomes possible' (Hardt and Negri, 2005, p. 340).

Strong Globalization Theories: a Critique

Strong globalization theories generally rest upon an interrelated set of claims about the operation of markets on a world scale and the contemporary geo-politics of global capitalism, all of which can be found in a particularly marked version in Hardt and Negri's work, and in a more nuanced and complex version in the work of Manuel Castells:

1. Markets increasingly operate on a global scale, and are increasingly dominated by a diminishing number of transnational corporations (TNCs).
2. These TNCs organize their activities on a global scale, and are less and less constrained by the policies and regulations of nation-states.
3. The power of nation-states is in decline, with many of their core operations being superseded by the laws and regulations established by supra-national governmental institutions.

4. As a result, political activity that focuses upon incremental reforms within the framework of the nation-state is misplaced, as real decision-making power increasingly resides outside of its territorial boundaries.

5. Globalization generates a global cultural experience where subjective identities are defined less by the relationship of individuals to geographically defined space sand the 'imagined community' of the nation-state, and more by their relationship to complex and interconnected global media and communications flows.

6. This 21st-century global condition is unprecedented, for while capitalism has been an international system since its inception, it is only now that global networks of technology and communication enable it to function as a fully integrated global system.

7. Globalization can lead to a 'race to the bottom', where 'capital will increasingly be able to play off workers, communities and nations against one another' (Crotty *et al.*, 1998, p. 118).

The empirical validity of these claims, and their relationship to trends in global media, will be assessed in more detail in the remainder of this book. At this stage, it is important to note that the core political-economic claims associated with these arguments have been disputed, by both those whom Held and McGrew (2002, pp. 3–5) describe as *globalization sceptics,* but also by those who agree with aspects of the strong globalization argument, but question the empirical validity of some of the claims that underpin it. Aspects of these arguments that relate to global culture and subjective identity will be addressed in more detail in Chapter 5.

First, the claim that markets are increasingly global and are dominated by TNCs, and that corporations operate on an increasingly global scale, has been disputed. The detail of these debates will be addressed in Chapter 3. At the same time, economic geographers have strongly contested the claim that TNCs have risen to such a level of pre-eminence that they have flattened the complex terrain of working in different national economies, and that the expansionary dynamic of TNCs has been such as to overwhelm points of distinction between national economies. As Dicken (2003a) has pointed out, using the UNCTAD *transnationality index* (TNI – to be discussed in detail in Chapter 3), the degree of transnationality of the world's 100 largest non-financial TNCs increased from 51.6 per cent in 1993 to 52.6 per cent in 1999. This is not a significant shift in the scale of global operations of these largest corporations – who would be expected to be at the forefront of globalization – and it indicates that, on average, most of the world's largest non-financial TNCs continued to undertake 40–50 per cent of their activities in their 'home' country, with only 16 companies undertaking more than 75 per cent of their activities outside of their country of origin (Dicken, 2003a, pp. 30–1). In other

words, the majority tend to be national corporations with international operations, rather than truly transnational corporations.[3]

Second, it has been argued, from the perspectives of business management, economic geography and economic sociology, that TNCs have not been able to efface the significance of their home environment in how they structure their international operations, and that international expansion invariably involves significant modifications to their general organizational culture (Hofstede, 1980; Doremus *et al.*, 1998; Dicken, 2003a; Gertler, 2003a; Clegg *et al.*, 2005). The available evidence (Doremus *et al.*, 1998) indicates that there is not a growing 'convergence' in their institutional and policy environments as a result of globalization, and that national differences in state ideology, the nature of political institutions and the nature of economic institutions continue to matter a great deal. Gertler (2003b, p. 112) has argued that 'the enduring path-dependent institutions of the nation-state retain far greater influence over the decisions and practices of corporate actors than the current prevailing wisdom would allow', while Dicken (2003a, p. 44) has concluded that 'TNCs ... remain, to a very high degree, products of the local "ecosystem" in which they were originally planted. TNCs are not placeless; "global" corporations are, indeed, a myth'.

Third, claims about the decline of the nation-state draw in part upon a statistical fallacy concerning the relative size of national economies and transnational corporations. To take one example, Steger (2003, p. 49) provides evidence that the global sales revenue of General Motors in 2000 exceeded the GDP of Denmark, Wal-Mart's global sales revenues exceeded Poland's GDP, Royal Dutch-Shell's global sales revenue exceeded Israel's GDP, IBM's global sales revenue exceeded the GDP of Ireland, and so on. Putting aside the question of what such figures might tell us about relative power in a global system – would anyone want to argue that Shell has more influence upon global events than Israel, to take one example? – these comparisons are the product of a fairly basic statistical fallacy. The fallacy is that Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is a measure of the *value-added* of a national economy, that is, the value of its outputs after subtracting the value of national inputs that went into producing those outputs, whereas gross sales figures for companies do not subtract these inputs. The problem here is one of using two very different accounting systems as the basis for making comparisons: if the data is corrected to only account for value-added in both cases, Denmark's 'economy' is about three times the size of that of General Motors (Dicken, 2003b, p. 30).

Fourth, it is argued that the assumption that supra-national governmental institutions such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and others have real power independently of those nation-states which constitute their constituent membership

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arises from a misunderstanding of the ongoing relationship between national governments and these supra-national governmental institutions. Joseph Stiglitz's (2002) important insider account of how a rigid adherence to neo-liberal economic orthodoxies within the IMF and the World Bank – the so-called 'Washington Consensus' – could ride roughshod over economic decision-making in countries such as Russia, Indonesia and Argentina in the 1990s, is a salutary account of how global institutions of governance could usurp and override both national sovereignty and local knowledge.[4] At the same time, the travails of the Doha Round of trade liberalization negotiations through the World Trade Organization, which commenced in 2001, reveal just how fragile and contingent the bases of supra-national institutional authority can be in the absence of consensus among leading national governments about appropriate direction for future development. Even in cases where national governments choose to adopt WTO guidelines, as China did as a condition of entry in 2001, there is evidence that this is as much to achieve domestic policy objectives – such as the desire to establish an enforceable copyright regime for the benefit of local creative producers – as it is to be a 'good global citizen' (Fewsmith, 2001; Zhu, 2003; Fitzgerald and Montgomery, 2005).

Fifth, the claim that contemporary globalization is without historical precedent has been questioned, most notably by 'globalization sceptics' such as Hirst and Thompson (1996). Hirst and Thompson argued that, while there has been a sustained and significant increase in international integration since 1970, it followed the historical period 1945–70 where international integration was relatively low, and the period 1914–45 where it actually declined. They make the point that, as measured in levels of international trade, investment, and indeed the movement of populations, the volumes of international transactions in the period from 1970 to the mid-1990s were in fact less than those of the *la belle époque* period of international capitalism from 1890 to 1914. Moreover, there is the argument that much of what is presented as globalization through raw figures on global trade and investment flows may in fact be regionalization, or expansion of corporate operations within well-established potential regions of operation. Rugman (2000) has argued that much of the empirical data that is taken as evidence of globalization in fact points to *regionalization* – the expansion of international trade and investment within defined geo-regional zones, such as the NAFTA region of North America (US/Canada/Mexico), the European Union, and the East Asian regional zone, led by Japan. There is certainly a need for caution in equating overseas expansion with globalization, as the entry of a US-based corporation into Canada, or a German corporation into Britain, does not indicate their repositioning as a fully fledged transnational corporation.

Sixth, Hirst and Thompson join other 'globalization sceptics' such as Gordon (1988), Boyer and Drache (1996) and Glyn and Sutcliffe (1999) in

questioning what they see as a pre-emptive write-off of the reforming capacities of the nation-state through globalization discourse. Hardt and Negri represent a particular Marxist variant of this discourse – albeit one with a long history – but it has been put by representatives of more neo-liberal positions, such as the first Director-General of the World Trade Organization, Renato Ruggieri, who argued that 'globalization [is] a reality which overwhelms all others', or the Australian Foreign Minister, Alexander Downer, who proposed that 'whether people fear globalization or not, they cannot escape it' (quoted in Flew and McElhinney, 2005, p. 290). On both the neo-liberal and neo-Marxist ends of the political spectrum, the 'talking up' of globalization in the face of contradictory evidence can also entail 'talking down' the prospects for significant institutional and policy reform within existing liberal-capitalist political-economic frameworks.

Seventh, the proposition that globalization involves a 'race to the bottom' as geographically mobile capital relocates to low-wage economies, forcing governments around the world to 'ratchet downwards' wages, employment conditions, environmental standards and other form of regulation in order to remain globally competitive, rests upon assumptions that are open to question. First, as Glyn and Sutcliffe (1999) observe, it is far more common in the case of manufacturing than in most service industries, where the international tradeability of goods and services is often less marked (for example, education is internationally traded, but less so than motor vehicles or children's clothing). Second, economic geographers such as Storper (1997a, 1997b) have drawn attention to the extent to which such assumptions, which are central to 'New International Division of Labour' (NIDL) and related dependency theories, rest upon some particular further assumptions about the nature of the product itself, the labour inputs required, the relevance of territory to its production, and the nature of consumer demand for that product. To summarize an argument that is considered in more detail in Chapter 3, globalization can be seen as generating two tendencies (see Table 2.1), one of which promotes cost-driven relocation of production. This is to be found in the industries and sectors where global mobility is greatly enhanced by advances in communications technology, and production has been relocating to lower-wage economies, particularly China which has arguably become the 'world's factory' from 1980 to the present (Deloitte Research, 2003). By contrast, there are other industries and sectors, and sub-branches within industries and sectors, where a range of factors related to the quality and uniqueness of both inputs and outputs sets limits to cost-driven globalization; we will refer to this as quality-driven globalization. These arguments will be considered in greater detail in Chapter 4. At this stage, they are being flagged as trends within global capitalism itself that complicate simple prognoses about the economic and geo-political implications of globalization, of the sort developed by theorists such as Hardt and Negri.

Manuel Castells' work is, I would argue, considerably more complex and nuanced than that of Hardt and Negri, who in effect present us with a world where institutions, policies, the nation-state and, indeed, place itself are becoming increasingly irrelevant as global capital has triumphed over national institutions. There are a number of critical commentaries on Castells that it is beyond the scope of this book to consider in detail (for example, Calabrese, 1999; Webster, 2002; Garnham, 2004; Hassan, 2004). What I would, however, like to focus upon are three issues raised in Castells' work: the notion of a 'space of flows' that is superseding place; the 'culture of real virtuality' driven by new media technologies; and the concept of a bifurcation between globally mobile 'information workers' and those consigned to particular localized spaces and hence to economic vulnerability in the face of globalization.

Table 2.1 Two tendencies of globalization of products and services

Factor	Cost-driven globalization	Quality-driven globalization
Nature of product	Generic and substitutable; highly price-sensitive demand	De-standardization and variety as drivers of non-price-driven demand
Labour inputs	Generic; unskilled and semi-skilled labour	Skilled and specialist; unique bundle of skills often sought
Significance of territory	Low; few location-specific resource or knowledge requirements	High; tendency for specialist knowledge to cluster in particular regions
Consumer demand	More sensitivity to price than other factors	Rising consumer expectations about product/service quality; rising average consumer incomes

Castells' theory of the global network society develops a geographical framework based upon the notion of a *space of flows*, or an organization of global space where 'the network of communication is the fundamental spatial configuration: places do not disappear, but their logic and meaning becomes absorbed in the network' (Castells, 1996, p. 412). It is an example of what Amin (2001, 2001, p. 395) identifies as an understanding of globalization in terms of 'a shift in the balance of power between different spatial scales ... [and] a deterritorialization and reterritorialization of social organization' in the associated scalar shift of places from the local and the national to the networked and the global. Amin's critique of such arguments is not based upon a defence of the local, or a *politics of place* – which he sees as the flipside of an interscalar mode of thinking about globalization – but rather proposes that places such as cities and regions are in fact 'energized networked

spaces' characterized by 'multiple spatialities of organization and praxis' (Amin, 2001, p. 396). What Amin is proposing, in contrast to Castells, is that rather than seeing people as either acting within the particularisms of place or within the global space of flows, the 'energized networked spaces' that are critical to the cultural and economic geography of globalization are sites in which people engage with the local, the national, and the global simultaneously, and that what is instead challenged are the 'traditional spatial distinctions between the local as near, everyday, and "ours", and the global as distant, institutionalised, or "theirs"' (Amin, 2001, p. 395). In other words, Amin's critique of traditional concepts of spatial ontology (that is, reading the local, the national and the global as discrete spatial forms) extends Castells' notion of the network society beyond the geographical framework within which he has set it.

Castells' understanding of the cultural forms of the global network society as involving the *culture of real virtuality*, or a 'bipolar opposition between the Net and the Self' (Castells, 1996, p. 3), rests upon two related dichotomies that have proven to be less and less tenable or sustainable over time. The first is the idea that there has been both a greater global concentration of control over media distribution and at the same time a growing diversification in the tastes and preferences of media users/audiences, so that 'we are not living in a global village, but in customised cottages globally produced and locally distributed' (Castells, 1996, p. 341). The counter-trends to greater global media concentration will be discussed in later chapters, but it is important to note that arguments that we are at the end of the age of mass media may both overstate the success of broadcast television in aggregating populations around particular media consumption patterns, and at the same time greatly underestimate the continued pull of media that can reach large segments of the population simultaneously and therefore act as a magnet for associated advertising revenues. As Garnham (2004) observes, there is the real danger here of conflating arguments concerning the perceived – and often overstated – threat of imported media content and cultural imperialism, with claims that there has been a substantive *de-massification* of the media audience. Garnham finds such arguments indicative of a tendency in theories of new media and its impacts where:

> There is a failure to distinguish between the effects of new ICTs on the economy in general, which then may or may not have significant effects in the spheres of politics and culture, and the effects directly on politics and culture themselves – for instance the claims made for the Internet as an agent of democratic renewal and the 'reinvention' of government or the supposed de-massification and globalization of the media. (Garnham, 2004, p. 179)

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The second set of concerns are about the relationship between the 'real' and the 'virtual'. In their detailed ethnographic study of uses of the Internet among Trinidadians, Miller and Slater (2000, p. 5) presented a compelling argument that 'we need to treat Internet media as continuous with and embedded in other social spaces', rather than identifying Internet use as happening within a 'virtual world' that is somehow disconnected from the everyday, the here and now, and interactions with pre-existing forms of community. How people engage with the multiple forms of communications associated with the Internet – which range from playing in MMOGs[5] to browsing websites and reading e-mail, and from being a consumer to a user/participant, as is promoted on blog sites and file-sharing sites such as *Flickr* and *YouTube* – is something best understood empirically and in a detailed sense, rather than read off from the intersection between particular technological developments and modish assumptions derived from recent cultural theory (Flew, 2001).