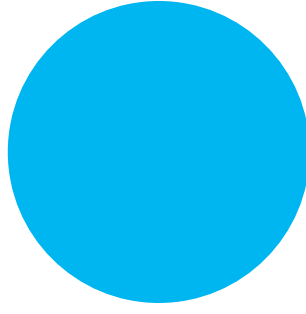


Challenge & Change:
**REASSESSING JOURNALISM'S
GLOBAL FUTURE**



Edited By
Alan Knight

CHALLENGE AND CHANGE

Reassessing Journalism's Global Future

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First published in 2013 by

UTS ePRESS
University of Technology, Sydney
Broadway NSW 2007
Australia
<http://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/>

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Challenge and change : reassessing journalism's global future
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ISBN: 978-0-9872369-0-6

The chapters in this book are peer reviewed.

Chapter Three:

One World? Globalising the Media

A/Prof. Tony Maniaty

ABSTRACT

The universe has lost its centre overnight, and woken up to find it has countless centres. So that each one can now be seen as the centre, or none at all. Suddenly there is a lot of room.

Bertolt Brecht, *Life of Galileo*.

The one who adapts his policy to the times prospers, and likewise the one whose policy clashes with the demands of the times does not.

Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*.

Globalization has many faces, from marketing to warfare, but underlying all of its diverse realisations has been the dramatic growth of the media, and its permeation into every aspect of society. In the interconnected world, information is digitized to the point where the media has become the touchstone of human intercourse, from personal affairs to global commerce, the means by which the world now operates - whether locally, nationally and transnationally. The spreading use of English as the global language has accelerated the trend, while the dramatically reduced cost of telecommunications has created an unprecedented flow of data, information and knowledge to every corner of the globe. Yet this 'great leap forward' also has its downside: increasingly, the flow of news - and differing perspectives on the news - is being processed and compressed through monolithic media companies, creating an 'homogenization effect' where uniformity is increasingly demanded, and diversity is gradually lost. In a borderless, media-saturated world, traditional notions of 'good journalism' and the values it represents have become increasingly tenuous. The rise of social media in the early 21st century has further complicated the global media landscape and clouded the future role of professional journalism. What forms of reporting might emerge in a wholly globalized world, and what must be done for a vibrant, useful media to survive in such a rapidly changing environment?

INTRODUCTION

Over a century ago, in 1900 - fifteen years before Alexander Graham Bell made the world's first telephone call - an American civil engineer John Elfreth Watkins gave an outrageously bold prediction. 'Wireless telephone and telegraph circuits,' he wrote, 'will span the world. A husband in the middle of the Atlantic will be able to converse with his wife sitting in her boudoir in Chicago. We will be able to telephone to China quite as readily as we now talk from New York to Brooklyn.'¹ Watkins also predicted that photographs would somehow be 'telegraphed' across vast distances ('If there be a battle in China a hundred years hence, snapshots of its most striking events will be published in the newspapers an hour later...') and that screens would link viewers around the planet ('Persons and things of all kinds will be brought within focus of cameras connected electrically with screens at opposite ends of circuits, thousands of miles at a span.') With extraordinary perspicacity, he was effectively describing the media realities of the early 21st century: the mobile phone, the Web, email and the Internet, Skype and social media. In 1960, when these inventions were still only concepts, the Canadian sociologist Marshall McLuhan coined the phrase 'the global village', similarly envisaging a world linked via 'electronic interdependence', sharing cultures and ideas across the majority of nations. In the Information and Computer Technology (ICT) era of the late 1990s, these visions became a reality.

Globalization has ceased to be the subject of futurology, and now stands as the dominant catalyst of change and exchange in our time. If its beginnings are lost in the depths of history - one could argue, for instance, that the process began when Magellan's expedition ships circumnavigated the globe in 1519-22 - its impacts are now being felt in fundamental ways across all nations and human societies, and

¹ Watkins, John Elfreth Jr., 'What May Happen in the Next Hundred Years', *Ladies Home Journal*, December 1900, p. 8., cited in Geoghegan, Tom, 'Ten 100-year predictions that came true', at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-16444966>, [accessed 24 June 2013](#).

are seemingly irreversible - nowhere more so than in the media. Globalization is having varied and often profound effects - disruptive, challenging, destructive, in some cases enlightening - on the practice, pace and content of journalism.

WHAT DO WE MEAN WHEN WE SAY GLOBALIZATION?

Globalization is far from being a singular concept; it means many things to many people, although journalists have often been the first to lump all international flows, movements, trends and developments under its convenient banner. As Nick Bisley has observed, globalization has 'a deeply uneven, contradictory and unpredictable character'², and the word is often used as shorthand for a range of 'quite disparate phenomena'.³ Many see globalization as a force for evil, mirroring earlier, negative manifestations - imperialism and colonialism - while others champion its power to expand economies, bring people together and generate ideas. Bisley offers as one definition of globalization 'the aggregate social consequences that derive from the dramatic increase in both the rate and speed with which people, goods and services, capital and knowledge are able to move around the globe'.⁴ Dutch sociologist Jan Aart Scholte argues that the most familiar four ways of interpreting globalization - as internationalization, as liberalization, as universalization, and as westernization - are already redundant, and suggests a fifth route: globalization as 'a shift in the nature of social space', in which 'a major change of spatial structure affects society as a whole'.⁵ This realization focuses more on the transplanetary and supraterritorial links that connect the majority of the world's citizens, and, Scholte notes, harks back to German philosopher Martin Heidegger's notion of 'distanceless',⁶ and Manuel Castells' more recent formulation of a 'network society' in which a new 'space of flows that substitutes for the space of places'.⁷ The development of this 'network state' raises, Castells warns, an ideological problem: coordinating common policy means a common language and a set of shared values. And because we live in a globalized, interdependent world, he notes, the space of political co-decision is necessarily global. Yet, as Castells notes, 'More often than not, governments do

² Bisley, Nick, *Rethinking Globalization*, Palgrave, London, 2007, p.8.

³ *ibid.*, p. 25.

⁴ Bisley, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

⁵ Scholte, Jan Aart, *Globalization*, Palgrave, New York, 2005, pp. 54-63.

⁶ Heidegger, Martin, *q.v.* Scholte, *ibid.*, p. 62.

⁷ Castells, Manuel, *q.v.* Scholte, p. 63.

not share the same principles or the same interpretation of common principles.’⁸ Thus governance in the global public sphere becomes a major issue, with no clear answers in a welter of differing national agendas. Central to all these interpretations are radical changes in the global media.

ISSUES AROUND GLOBALIZATION AND THE MEDIA

Is the globalization of the media a force for good or bad? Does it signal a step forward in human development - or regression? The combination of digitisation and corporatisation has accelerated the homogenisation of traditional media around the world, reducing mainstream media diversity while radically altering the old dynamics of trans-border data and information flows - with significant impacts on global trade, regional and national politics, and culture. Concurrently the spread of social media, particular in youth demographics, has created new distribution outlets and new forms of content, radically altering traditional concepts of journalism.

Earlier arguments that the West was creating a globalized, American-led ‘one-way’ media flow have, in the 21st century, been countered to a substantial degree by the emergence of a multi-dimensional model - in which content distribution has become ‘a river without banks’, flowing in many directions, in which the ‘old’ community of nations is threatened by new flexible, borderless communities of interest, creating a network with no clear centre and potentially threatening the established order. For now, the hegemonic model still dominates; as media groups amalgamate and grow larger under economic pressure, ongoing fears of cultural imperialism remain valid, and are not unfounded. Yet borderless social media is gaining power rapidly, from regional revolutions in the Middle East to issues-based campaigns on environment, human rights and other areas. Are these two competing media forces heading for a collision that could undermine the very shape of societies and the role of nation states? What models could emerge that might combine the best of both?

News has become a product much like any other, shipped around the planet in seconds to markets hungry for content, sold to consumers as manipulatively as any new car or toothpaste. Globalization has also given billions of people a camera and communications unit; each of them is ‘on the spot’ and able to feed content into

⁸ Castells, Manuel, *ibid*, p. 43.

the global media machine. Given the rise in amateur coverage of events, what role will professional reporters play in future, if any? Is the dream of many aspirants of 'a career in journalism' itself redundant?

The relentless march of globalization in the early 21st century has produced deep, and seemingly contradictory, effects on journalism - in particular, foreign reporting - and on media ownership itself. On one hand, the convergence of media platforms - print, radio, television, online - and the rise of trans-national corporations (TNCs) such as Australia's News Corporation, America's Time Warner and Disney, France's Vivendi and Germany's Bertelsmann has produced a concentration of media power hitherto unseen, resulting in a funneling effect that produces greater homogeneity and standardization of news content and reduced diversity of analysis and opinion in the international sphere, and fewer correspondents posted to foreign countries. As transnational actors, such TNCs tend to focus less on national, regional and local concerns than on news content that reflects their increasingly global reach, with considerably less interest in specific communities than the smaller media units they have often purchased or otherwise displaced. While regulations and subsidies may protect localized content up to a point, the political clout of TNCs within any given marketplace typically outweighs local interests. (The influence of News Corporation's chairman Rupert Murdoch on national politics is pervasive and well documented.)

On the other hand, globalization of the new social media - the world as seen through a global maze of personal blogs, and countless millions of individual posts on Twitter, Facebook, and other emerging new media platforms - along with the availability of cheaper, broadcast-quality newsgathering technology, has also seen the emergence of a new breed of journalist who holds no allegiance to any single news organisation and whose output is readily available to an increasingly cost-conscious market for breaking news stories, as well as features and images. What then is the ultimate fate of these diverging paths of newsgathering? Are they on a collision course, or can they be reconciled and possibly merged?

WHERE DID MEDIA GLOBALIZATION COME FROM?

Broadly, throughout history, societies have sought communication and interaction rather than isolation. The spread of ideas may have been thwarted until the Middle Ages by those in positions of authority, but the appearance of Gutenberg's printing press in the mid-15th century, with its moveable type and ability to produce endless

copies of transformative texts, gave rise to that democratic bias which has been the hallmark of ‘the media’ ever since. By the 19th century, rising wealth and literacy in the middle classes of Europe and North America, and the growth of big department stores with substantial advertising budgets, saw rapid expansion of newspapers on a national scale. These factors in turn accelerated international trade and financial exchange, the development of new technologies and manufacturing processes, and the spread of new ideas between nations: the genesis of what we now refer to as globalization.

This shift towards a unified world grew in the late 19th century, as the industrial revolution and resulting trade linked those leading European nations - Great Britain, Germany, France - that had formerly been at war with each other. Suddenly there was far more to be gained through peace than conflict; the idea of progress took centre-stage. At the 1849 World Peace Congress in Paris, the French author Victor Hugo declared: ‘All our advances are revealing and manifesting themselves together, in rapid succession... [...]...everything is moving at once, political economy, science, industry, philosophy, legislation, and is converging upon the same end, the creation of well-being and benevolence...’⁹

Yet globalization as we understand it today was still far off. World War One was a bloody warning that mutual trust would not come easily; the international language Esperanto failed to take hold; the collapse of the League of Nations was a reminder of the difficulties of global co-operation; while the Comintern International, raising hopes for a global Socialist revolution, fizzled into Russian civil war. Words, hopes and dreams alone were not enough to bind diverse peoples together; it would be another 50 years or more before advances in technology and communications, and the freer flow of trade and services, would achieve what peace conferences could not - the bridging of human differences to a point where shared experience, if not world peace, was possible. As such, globalization - as it took shape in the late 20th and early 21st centuries - was born more of societal, economic and technological forces than of political or ideological ones.

What were the principal causes of this extraordinary shift in human relations? Globalization results from the increasing rate and speed with which people, goods and services, capital and knowledge are able to move around the globe. The forces that shape this process are many and varied. They include (but are not limited to)

⁹ Hugo, Victor, at <http://www.gavroche.org/vhugo/peacecongress.shtml>, accessed 4 May 2013.

the wide availability and falling cost of mass communications; the export of goods through containerization, and the movement of goods and people via air travel; the freeing up of international trade agreements and transactions; the rise in offshore manufacturing; cross-cultural marriage, migration, and the flow of refugees; military alliances; the rise of multi-national business and transnational corporations; global commodity chains; the continuing flow of populations from country to cities; the impact of worldwide religions; mass tourism; the spread of English as the global *lingua franca*; money transfers, including workers' remittances from abroad; the sharing of technological advances, from agriculture to manufacturing; improving levels of health and education across all continents.

Yet these diverse factors are themselves all dependent on the flow of information, the ultimate force behind globalization, which has been accelerated by the spread of personal and organizational computers and mobile phones, the rapidly falling cost of communications in both national and international markets, and widespread take-up of social media. To this degree, the media has become a central actor – arguably *the* central actor - in the globalization story, with more influence than any single nation.

To understand that immense changes that media globalization has wrought, it is useful to consider the period 1980-2000, prior to the full adoption of newsroom computerization and digitization of content. While communications satellites had enabled the possibility of 'live' or 'near-live' broadcasting of news events, the three main media platforms - television, radio and newspapers - cohabited on roughly equal terms, dividing the advertising spoils of boom economic times (in the case of Australia's Fairfax newspapers, the so-called 'rivers of gold') and assured in their market niches. The Internet was seen largely as a source of information, and a vehicle for email communications; newsroom computers, mostly desk-bound PCs, were generally used by journalists as word processors.

THE SHRINKING COMPUTER AND THE SHRINKING PLANET

With the arrival of the 21st century, several factors changed the media landscape with extraordinary speed. The first might be called the Ever-Shrinking Computer: the rapid take-up of portable laptop computers, and subsequently of tablet screens and smart phones. With portability, notions of fixed-time, fixed-place media dissolved; the demand for news immediacy became overwhelming. Comprehensive television networks with nightly news shows surrendered

audiences to cable news channels, particularly those such as CNN International and BBC World specifically geared for online, global coverage and 24/7 'live' delivery of major stories. A new generation of consumers, brought up on a diet of video games, and visual and computer literacy, also helped drive a new agenda for journalism. Underpinning all these factors was the technological possibility of convergence on Internet-based platforms: suddenly the newspaper not only had a branded website, but was streaming live video and audio coverage of breaking stories. The viral spread of smart phones in the second decade of the 21st century sealed the fate of so-called 'traditional' or 'legacy' media: newspapers would no longer break hard news stories as they had for more than a century, and viewers would not wait for a once-nightly news bulletin to find out what was happening in the wider world.

These shifts in media were not merely technological. New social, economic and political orders quickly emerged from the break with long-standing traditions. Much as the Cold War struggle of the 20th century between the great ideological blocks of communism and capitalism kept alternative contenders in line, so too the media in the West had adopted a gatekeeper role under the banner of 'editorial authority', backed by claims of fearlessness, righteousness and all-knowingness. The phrase 'the power of the press' carried with it a warning to those who would dare to confront its role as the champion of free speech; yet it often concealed, as well, a cozy and lazy relationship with the ruling status quo. Now consumers themselves had the power to communicate and share news, information, ideas and opinions, and to challenge the gatekeeper model of news management, helped by dramatically lower costs for all forms of communication. As Jeffrey Frieden notes, by the 21st century, satellites and fiberoptic cables had seen the cost of telephone calls tumble: 'In the 1920s, the average American worker would have had to work three weeks to pay for a five-minute telephone call from New York to London; in 1970 the same call would have cost eight hours' wages; by 2000, about fifteen minutes.'¹⁰ By 2005, the number of mobile phones worldwide exceeded the number of fixed line telephones.¹¹

Text messaging was even cheaper than talking on the phone; for just a few cents, families spread around the globe could connect, and buyers and sellers in remote corners of the globe could negotiate deals directly, in minutes, a development with

¹⁰ Frieden, Jeffrey, *Global Capitalism: Its Fall and Rise in the Twentieth Century*, W.W. Norton, New York, 2006, p. 392.

¹¹ See Thussu, Daya Kishan, ed., *International Communication: A Reader*, p. xxii.

powerful economic and social implications in developing parts of Africa and Asia. The Internet too grew astronomically, as Frieden observes; by 2001 more information could be transmitted in a second over a single cable than in 1997 had been sent over the entire Internet in a month.¹² For a dollar a day, consumers can gain access to the content of hundreds of television channels, many if not most broadcasting from outside the viewers' countries.

In the face of this global revolution, the response of 'big' media was, if anything, to grow 'bigger': synonymous with globalization in all spheres has been the rise of trans-national corporations (TNCs), and the media is no exception. Indeed, globalization is more ideally suited to media amalgamation and consolidation - given that digitised product can be shifted around the globe in nano-seconds - than to almost any other economic activity. (By 1999, 13 of the top 25 American corporations were in the high technology and telecommunications sectors.¹³) One impact of this trend - in which the profit motive results in the overt commodification of news content - has been a loss of media diversity, as smaller players are consumed by TNCs searching to grow their market share and eliminate competitors.

THE IMPACT OF TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATIONS

In purely economic terms, TNCs sit at the very heart of globalization. Companies as diverse as Microsoft, BHP-Billiton, Toyota, Citicorp and Nestle straddled the globe in search of new resources, new sources of labour, and new markets. Traditionally, the media world was confined to national borders, limited by the bulk of printing presses and the reach of broadcasting technologies, by distribution networks, and by factors such as language, social and cultural values, and the size of the consumer class able to support viable advertising incomes. By the 1980s, much had changed: the spread of communications satellites, computerisation and digitisation; the rise in education levels worldwide; more efficient infrastructures and distribution networks. National players such as Australia's News Corporation spread their wings, buying up existing media properties from New York to Fiji and developing new ones (Sky TV in Italy, Star TV in China) in rising markets, especially Asia. New players such as Yahoo! and Google with decidedly global business models quickly evolved through aggressive takeover strategies as fully-

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

fledged TNCs. As Internet usage expanded worldwide, so too did TNC audiences - and advertising incomes. CNN International, for example, pitched to global advertisers the offer of 'unrivalled access to reach high-income consumers'.¹⁴ What matters is not the size of any TNC's individual media divisions, but the ability to amalgamate operations, integrate content, and collectivize the audience. On this last point, as media industry veteran Terry Semel noted, 'Many small audiences are as good for advertisers as few large audiences, and indeed may be better. This has huge implications for content, turning it into one long continuum - from professional to amateur, from blockbuster to subculture niche.'¹⁵

This has been good news for TNCs, but less so for journalism. Inevitably, the issue boils down to two seemingly irreconcilable points: that the very nature of the news media is changing, and journalism must adapt or die; and that the number of well-cashed players available to employ journalists on a professional basis is shrinking, along with the need for high volumes of content from diverse sources. This conflict beguiles the industry in virtually all developed markets. Increasingly, the business is less about generating unique stories than about the *exchange* of news product. The resulting 'long tail' of media content across the global landscape conceals a harsh reality: that much of it stems from a very narrow base, and increasingly much of it is sourced from either low-paid journalism entrants or from amateurs, and not from experienced, professional journalists. On this basis, the new economics of global media may prove the undoing of the profession of journalism as it has been widely practiced for more than a century, with unforeseen effects on the nature of social interaction and of democratic society.

The fact that the majority of media TNCs are run by technologists and financial executives rather than journalists (as national newspapers and broadcasters once were) suggests that the influence and values of journalism will count for less in their newsgathering operations and content, as 'lifestyle' media aimed at middle-class consumers and advertisers gains dominance. In the first decade of the 21st century, this trend was already apparent. In a 2006 report, the global accountancy firm PriceWaterhouseCoopers predicted that successful media companies would become 'marketplaces that let consumers search, research, share and configure

¹⁴ CNN International advertisement, *Advertising Age International*, 29 June 1998, p. 6., q.v. McChesney, Robert, 'The Media System Goes Global', in Thussu, Daya, op. cit., p. 211.

¹⁵ Semel, Terry, q.v. 'The gazillion-dollar question', *The Economist*, April 22, 2006.

their media experiences.’¹⁶ The new lifestyle media would, it accurately forecast, would ‘bridge the world of unlimited professional and user-created video content with the world of limited consumer time and attention.’

An important sub-current in the development of transnational media has been the expansion of government-owned (and, in some cases, government controlled) global television networks, established in many cases to promote so-called soft diplomacy and soft power. Networks such as France 24, Russia Today, Press TV (Iran) and CCTV (China) have joined established players such as CNN International and BBC World in the global battle for ‘hearts and minds’, featuring entertainment and informational content which showcases national life and values in positive ways: a powerful tool when coupled with trade, aid and other foreign policy initiatives. When such global (and mainly Anglophone) content is added to the pool of available channels in any country, it competes with local channels and to some degree must further narrow the general employment opportunities for journalists.

These and other transitions have resulted in a radically changed world order. From a postwar world in which the media was regarded primarily as a central component of national affairs, reflective of national opinions and values, the focus has shifted. The rise of giant communication TNCs on one hand, and of globalized social media on the other, allied with ever-increasing economic interdependence between states, has reframed the traditional division between domestic and international affairs and turned the media itself into a ‘non-state’ actor in transnational affairs.

ADJUSTING TO THE DIGITAL TIDE

Digitisation on the global scale has become the epicentre of a giant ‘push-pull’ contradiction, between curiosity and anxiety. We turn on the news to ‘see what’s happening’ - and as quickly we click off because it’s ‘too much to take in’. We want to know, and we don’t want to know. We want to engage, and we want to escape. Technology has created the media accountant’s dream - plentiful content at

¹⁶ PriceWaterHouseCoopers, ‘The Rise of Lifestyle Media: Achieving Success in the Digital Convergence Era’, 2006, at <http://www.pwc.com/us/en/technology-innovation-center/assets/lifestylemedia-gx.pdf>, accessed 7 February 2013.

low cost – but it confronts media consumers with an increasing dilemma of choice, a digital swamp which appears both endless (and endlessly time-engaging) and fragmented, frequently offering an illusory choice - a ‘bit sampling’ stream of electronic output lacking either depth or relevance to national consumers. Aligned with ‘the need for speed’ implied in 24/7 breaking news, and the resulting homogenisation of content aimed at such a profusion of global markets, what future is there for more complex forms of journalism? Will there be any viable platforms for reportage of the calibre and scope of ‘Hiroshima’, John Hersey’s 31,000-word account of the dropping of the atomic bomb on Japan, which filled an edition of *The New Yorker* in 1946, and which, in 1999, was voted by a distinguished panel as the best single piece of journalism of the 20th century?¹⁷ With the constant demands of urgency and brevity, where every second counts, the current mainstream media landscape actively conspires against context - and discourages its natural offspring, serious debate. While the quest for truth remains universally the ethical bedrock of great reporting, miniaturization of consumer platforms such as smart phones and hyperventilated deadlines suggest little room for context. Yet without it, single events in the chain will always appear random, chaotic, messy, and difficult to place in a meaningful, broader canvas. (This, rather than the old journalistic conundrum of ‘objectivity/subjectivity’, would seem to constitute a truer guideline for, and measure of, balance in story coverage.) On this basis, then, what hope also for the future of serious foreign reporting?

IMPACTS ON FOREIGN COVERAGE

‘No one will open a bureau in Utopia,’ observed Associated Press correspondent Mort Rosenblum in 1993.¹⁸ Conflict sits at the heart of most major news stories, especially in the realm of foreign reporting, and the hallmark of great journalism organisations such as the BBC or *The New York Times* has traditionally been the high importance they placed on comprehensive, well-informed coverage generated by their own correspondents posted overseas on a long-term basis. Recent years have seen substantial cuts by major news organisations in their foreign reporting staff, and the shutting down of many bureaus; the closure of the Australian ABC’s Moscow office in 2013 after 20 years was indicative of the trend, as news organisations trim costs and turn to agency-generated reporting for foreign content. Managers argue that vastly improved communications and transport networks

¹⁷ See Kunkel, Thomas, ‘In Harm’s Way’, *American Journalism Review*, April 2003.

¹⁸ Rosenblum, Mort, *Who Stole the News?*, John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1993, p. 280.

provide flexibility, allowing correspondents to be flown into breaking stories as needed. Yet few would argue that the long-term presence of a correspondent in any country results in more informed, contextualized coverage, supported by a cultivated network of high-level, trusted contacts and sources providing background to the reportage. Fluency in local languages and a working knowledge of social and cultural mores also adds value to foreign reporting.

Such nuances generally escape the ‘fly-in, fly-out’ correspondent, who in turn is increasingly reporting not for a specialized national audience but for an international news marketplace, generating content that must be ‘user friendly’ to a wide array of audiences, from Vancouver to London to Shanghai to Sydney. Cultural subtleties give way to mass global appeal; the specific relevance of stories to individual nations and their foreign and economic policies is, in this scenario, replaced by observations that speak to the world in general (and mostly in English) but to nobody in particular. The counter argument is that such generalized reporting brings the peoples of the world closer together, by shedding national prejudices and sharing common experiences, yet the continuation over decades of many conflicts, especially in Africa and the Middle East, suggests that this rather idealized view is degraded by realities.

Certainly in one field, the reporting of the global climate change, the transnational media model has overcome national differences to bring a common awareness of a global issue to audiences of millions. (Likewise the coverage of the AIDS/HIV crisis has transcended national and continental boundaries as people worldwide search for solutions.) What began in the second half of the 20th century as local and national environmental concerns regarding pollution and soil degradation has grown through global media coverage into a largely common belief that climate change is real and having a fundamental, negative impact on the planet. ‘Climate’ has now become a featured section of many international and national news websites. Broadening and focusing coverage has generated debate and led to global agendas to find answers. In this process, the diminishing quality of the environment has progressed through sustained media coverage from being a community (local) issue to a lifestyle and economic (national) concern to being an anthropological (global) last stand.

Clearly subjects which transcend national borders, such as climate change and deadly viruses, are matters of vital common interest; whether transnational media (under pressure to generate profits, or, in the case of government-funded networks, to cut costs) will continue to cover them with sufficient journalistic resources will

in turn influence how governments (facing both economic strain and growing public pressure) will continue to coordinate global efforts to improve the situation. For now, and for many in the world, such problems are still localized - ice caps may melt and sea levels may be rising, but not everywhere. Hence climate change reporting calls above all for what Simon Cottle refers to as ‘cosmopolitan vision’, one that takes full advantage of the wider flows and impacts of global communication.¹⁹ Yet most societies respond primarily to parochial concerns, to what Cottle calls ‘the pull of the national’. Local media focuses mostly on local impacts; whether global media continues to place sufficient emphasis on the global impacts of climate change and its threat to the planet will depend heavily on its financial support for sustained and in-depth foreign reporting. (As Cottle observes, visualisations of climate change abound in the global media, while explanations of resulting impacts around the planet are considerably rarer.) Media TNCs will also need, ultimately for their own business survival, to develop a clearer understanding of the troubled relationship between environmentalism and consumerism, in what Jan Aart Scholte refers to as the ‘transplanetary’ space²⁰. For their part, as the potential for eco-media-fatigue grows, journalists worldwide will need to produce more relevant, imaginative and thought-provoking coverage of the global ecology in order to generate even wider debate and stronger government action. In a forecast scenario that sees the quality of human life facing grave threats, journalists are as much at risk as anyone else.

In a similar vein, the widening gap between the world’s rich and poor poses considerable challenges for global journalism. The conflict and physical violence which this social and economic divide generates receives extensive coverage; the underlying causes of such conflicts are rarely explored in any depth in the global media, while repetition of images of suffering without meaningful background or context can quickly lead to audience apathy. Swedish media researcher Birgitta Höijer found from interviews with 500 people that while pictures in the media of suffering people might invite the audience to experience moral compassion at a distance, and might mobilize compassion, they could also lead to the syndrome of compassion fatigue.²¹ ‘Crimes against humanity such as encroachment and

¹⁹ See Cottle, Simon, ‘Global Crisis Reporting’, *Journalism in the Global Age*, McGraw Hill, 2009, pp. 71-91; see also Holm, Hans-Henrik, ‘The Effect of Globalization on Media Structures and Norms,’ in Hjarvard, Stig (ed.), *News in a Globalized Society*, Nordicom, 2001, pp. 113-128.

²⁰ (2005, 58; 69),

²¹ Höijer, Birgitta, ‘The Discourse of Global Compassion: The Audience and Media Reporting of Human Suffering’, *Media Culture Society* 2004, 26: 513.

violence against people and populations have a strong appeal for the audience, especially the female audience,' she found, but 'the large number of reports on suffering and the repetitive and stereotyped character of the depictions may tire the audience out.'

In 2010, the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at Oxford published a comprehensive paper on the future of international news coverage.²² Its author, former BBC News executive Richard Sambrook, argued that in the globalised media world - where professional news organisations were competing increasingly with both social media and information provided directly to audiences via government, NGO and company communications officers - foreign bureaux and correspondents 'may no longer be central to how we learn about the world'. Sambrook's interviews with news executives and correspondents were illuminating. ABC News' Chuck Lustig noted how 'the Foreign Correspondent has become a simple fireman who goes from fire to fire just like the neighbourhood fire brigade. Once the fire is out they move on...'²³. The days of the multi-million dollar foreign bureau, Sambrook concluded, were gone, along with 'a shrieking of professional foreign newsgathering' which was replaced by 'an explosion of other sources of information'. These shifts were being accompanied in the era of globalization by 'a new set of cultural perspectives, which have challenged and undermined old assumptions about reporting.'²⁴ On this point, media commentator William Powers noted:

Foreign news is out there in great profusion these days, particularly online, but it is a different kind of foreign news. While the old foreign news had an air of urgency that was a product of the cold war and technological constraints, the new foreign news is diffuse, many-layered, sprawling, chaotic and terribly complicated... like the world itself.²⁵

Tom Kent of the Associated Press summed up this shift from the binary Cold War view to the new, uncertain world order: 'Now it is not as simple as 'us and

²² Sambrook, Richard, 'Are Foreign Correspondents Redundant? The Changing Face of International News', Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, Oxford, 2010.

²³ q.v. *ibid*, p. 18.

²⁴ Sambrook, *ibid*, pp. 97-98.

²⁵ Power, William, q.v. *ibid*, p. 53.

them'.²⁶ As Sambrook notes, global differences in cultural values and agendas are being revealed more than ever, posing challenges to transnational news services:

The issues at stake are partly professional - how best to serve news consumers, how best to run newsgathering organisations - but also moral. How should we try to understand and represent other countries and peoples who are physically distant from us?²⁷

One answer, as news content becomes less territory specific, is the possibility of global journalism, or what Peter Berglez describes as 'foreign journalism's younger cousin' - a form which 'transgresses and transcends the traditional domestic-foreign dichotomy.'²⁸ As globalization creates evermore complex relations between peoples, places and practices, Berglez asserts, global journalism is the news style which could integrate and cover these relations in everyday news production:

In contrast to journalism with a national outlook, global journalism pays attention to and covers political identities which do not primarily rest on a particular national culture or ethnic belonging, but which emanate from universal ideologies or transnational issues, such as climate change or the fight against social inequalities in the world... As a general principle, the greater the emphasis on the universal dimension of a political identity or struggle, its existence in different countries and continents, the more global the journalism.²⁹

Such journalism may be, as Berglez asserts, 'the natural consequence of increasing connectedness, boundarylessness and mobility in the world... the form of journalism needed in times of globalization', but whether news consumers will want (or pay) for such a product is questionable. For as Berglez notes, even in the age of globalization, the consumer's domestic view of the world is powerful, and dominant.

²⁶ Kent, Tom, q.v. *ibid.*, p. 54.

²⁷ Sambrook, Richard, *ibid.*

²⁸ Berglez, Peter, 'What is global journalism? Theoretical and empirical conceptualisations', *Journalism Studies*, Vol. 9, No 6, 2008, pp. 845-858.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

ESTABLISHMENT NARRATIVES VERSUS THE INFORMAL MASSES

If the amalgamation of mainstream media is a hallmark of globalization, its counterweight is the rise of social media. This also has profound implications for the future of journalism, beyond the obvious ability for friends, families, colleagues and communities of interest to communicate news, ideas and opinions in the briefest of timeframes to all corners of the globe. When allied with rising education levels, and the acquisition of basic media technical skills such as recording, editing and posting content, people from all walks of life, in virtually all countries, now have the means to create their own ‘channels’ of audio-visual and textual information flow. As the cost of smart phones tumbles and their technical sophistication increases, and the interactivity of networks builds, this trend is set to amplify, creating a competitive, alternative global media structure. In this scenario, Facebook and Twitter are not merely ‘personal sharing sites’ but also represent radical shifts in a tumultuous media landscape, with still unknowable consequences.

Certainly the spread of social media platforms and their high take-up levels has changed the dynamics of the relationship between the media and audiences: what was formerly ‘from them to us’ (one-way, top down and impersonal, authoritative in tone, a closed system) has rapidly become ‘between us’ (two-way, bottom up and personalized, open to challenge and debate, an open-ended network). Occurring with remarkable speed in historical terms, this shift, as David Sifry noted in 2006, transformed the old media’s ‘lectures’ into new media ‘conversations’ with ‘the people formerly known as the audience’.³⁰ In the period since, this has led to a fundamental questioning of the *modus operandi* of mainstream media, particularly television news, with its power to control the timing and substance of content, and its attitude of all-knowingness and claims on accuracy and truth carried by studio-based presenters in creaseless suits and perfect makeup. Skepticism has overtaken acceptance, and the tone of public debate has changed irrevocably. In the eyes of many, the age of participation and peer production is already upon us, and the media and journalism will never be the same again.

³⁰ Sifry, David, q.v. ‘Among the Audience,’ *The Economist*, 22 April 2006.

MEDIA REGULATION, CENSORSHIP AND ETHICS IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD

The vast global scale and speed of social media makes it difficult to compare its impact on any one story against the output of traditional journalistic media. Yet in the case of one offspring of the new media, Wikileaks, the result is more tangible. Set up by Australian computer hacker Julian Assange, Wikileaks in November 2010 produced the biggest leak of official records ever: more than a quarter-of-a-million cables from American diplomatic stations around the world, dwarfing the previous biggest leak, the Pentagon Papers - confidential documents on the Vietnam War - in 1971. This spectacular event was quickly merged into the media landscape, touted on the one hand as evidence of American wrongdoing and a powerful new form of journalistic exposure, and on the other as blatant and dangerous grandstanding by Assange and his Wikileaks collaborators. (The then-U.S. Secretary of State Hilary Clinton voiced the concerns of many nations, declaring that 'Disclosures like these tear at the fabric of the proper function of responsible government.'³¹) Assange claimed to be practicing what he called 'scientific journalism' although, as Rodney Tiffin observed, the release of primary documents 'is not a substitute for processing them into a digestible, meaningful narrative'.³² ABC News Australia reporter Andrew Fowler noted that while Assange had created a system where the sources of any document remained anonymous, 'the major question about whether the document is a fake remains unanswered.'³³ Others believed that Assange had produced a major shift in journalism, creating what Jay Rosen called a 'stateless news organization'.³⁴

³¹ Clinton, Hilary, q.v. Neuman, Scott, 'Clinton: WikiLeaks 'Tear At Fabric' Of Government', at <http://www.npr.org/2010/11/29/131668950/white-house-aims-to-limit-wikileaks-damage>, accessed 15 May 2013.

³² Tiffin, Rodney, 'Wikileaks and mega-plumbing issues – unresolved dilemmas revisited', *Global Media Journal*, Australian edition, 5:1, 2011, at XXXX

³³ Fowler, Andrew, *The Most Dangerous Man in the World: The Inside Story on Julian Assange and the Wikileaks secrets*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 2011, p. 53.

³⁴ Rosen, Jay, 'The Afghanistan War Logs Released by Wikileaks, the World's First Stateless News Organization', at <http://pressthink.org/2010/07/the-afghanistan-war-logs-released-by-wikileaks-the-worlds-first-stateless-news-organization/>, accessed 7 May 2013.

The Wikileaks case highlighted both the power and vulnerability of 21st century information systems in a globalized world. Intelligence which is digitized and stored on computers can also be stolen and downloaded onto other computers, and spread transnationally within nanoseconds. The technology is relatively straightforward; the ethics involved are considerably less so. The initial recipients of the Wikileaks secret documents - organisations such as *The Guardian*, *Le Monde* and *The New York Times* - eventually criticised the subsequent wholesale release of the files by Wikileaks as potentially endangering the lives of agents and whistleblowers named in the files. In the process, Wikileaks itself increasingly became the story; as Tiffen noted, the actual leaked files had ‘almost no audience appeal’.³⁵

The ability to circumvent state censorship features heavily in the Wikileaks story, as does the morality and ethics of doing so with highly classified information. What it also highlights is the increasingly complex issue of how to regulate national media in a digitized, globalized world, where barriers to the flow of information are seen to be both fragile and porous. From a journalistic perspective, this can be good news; for national governments, it challenges the status quo of media policy, regulation and law. It can also impact on journalism practice. In its ethics guidelines, the Canadian Association of Journalists, for example, states, ‘We clearly identify news and opinion so that the audience knows which is which.’³⁶ While its Australian counterpart, the Media Alliance, does not make specific reference to such a separation in its Code of Ethics, the principle is widely accepted across Western democracies, if not always adhered to. Yet in many countries, the notion that news and opinion can or should be separated is openly rejected; in societies across southern Europe and the Middle East, for instance, the majority of media outlets report domestic, and even foreign news, on strongly delineated political lines, with news and opinion woven inside a single report. (This flies in the face of another of the CAJ’s ethical standards: ‘We do not allow our own biases to impede fair and accurate reporting.’) Standards around the world traditionally reflected what was acceptable to national audiences. In the world of transnational broadcasting and the world wide web, news and information content spills in every direction, and potentially to every corner of the globe. In this environment, who is to monitor, regulate and judge media standards?

³⁵ Tiffen, op. cit.

³⁶ <http://www.caj.ca/?p=1776>

One issue with obvious ethical implications is the ability to manipulate images on a global scale. The notion of selective shooting and editing of photographs and film for the purposes of misinformation is not new; the practice dates back to the American Civil War and both sides in World War One were quick to see the potential of film as propaganda. Germany's Erich von Ludendorff, the army Chief of Staff, noted that it was 'absolutely imperative, if this war is to have a happy outcome, that cinema be able to act with the efficiency of a weapon of war in every field in which Germany wishes to exercise her influence.' Months earlier, the official screening of *With Our Heroes in the Somme* featured recreated images of battle, leading the *Berliner Volks-Zeitung* newspaper to note: 'Das objektiv est objektiv.'³⁷ By the early 21st century, the ability of Photoshop and other software to alter both the content and meaning of photos and moving images had rendered all media and all audiences vulnerable to being deliberately misled. Nor was the issue confined to mischievous amateurs. In 2006, the news agency Reuters was forced to issue a 'PICTURE KILL' notice when it discovered that images of the Israel-Lebanon conflict taken by one of its Middle East freelancers, Adnan Hajj, had been digitally manipulated by the photographer. Other, similar cases have emerged, highlighting the ease with which images can be altered in laptop computers before transmission, and the speed with which such images can be distributed globally for publication, broadcasting and posting. While software has been developed to detect manipulation, there exists no transnational regulatory framework around which to police these ethical dilemmas.

JOURNALISM: WHERE TO FROM HERE?

The first media revolution launched by Gutenberg in 1448 gave rise to printing, publishing, newspapers, journalists, and, ultimately, to the profession of journalism, which arguably reached its apotheosis in the second half of the 20th century, when investigative print journalism, photojournalism, and television and radio reportage combined to give strong carriage to the spread of democracy and opened windows for millions onto the wider world. In the opening decades of the 21st century, much changed: a radically reshaped world order, heralded by the attacks of 21 September 2001 and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, replaced a degree of predictability in global affairs with uncertainty on many fronts - strategic, economic, environmental, social and technological. This volatility was also

³⁷ Trans. 'The camera doesn't lie.'

reflected in the turmoil which confronted global media and the integrated business models which had evolved over decades of rising profitability. Newspapers which had shaped the very societies they operated in were suddenly hit with declining readerships and falling advertising revenues; those which turned to online models in the hope of survival, pouring scarce resources into new technologies and offering free access as audience bait, often found themselves staring at a wall of rising debt, and staff which could not be funded from profits. The practice of professional journalism as a central plank in democratic societies could no longer be taken for granted. Confusion about next moves went hand-in-hand with nostalgia about the media past and professional anxiety about the future.

We began this chapter with some predictions made in the early 20th century. One hundred years later, futurology remains an inexact science. Many, for example, have touted tablet devices such as the iPad as the medium of the future, including News Corp chairman Rupert Murdoch, who believed that tablets ‘may well be saving the newspaper industry’. In February 2011 News Corp introduced its tablet platform *The Daily*, which lasted only 21 months before closing down due to lack of subscribers.³⁸ That a media operator as experienced as Rupert Murdoch can misjudge the market indicates the complexity of the issues confronting the media and journalism. As new technologies merge in the media world, creating both uncertainty and opportunity, media markets themselves are shifting at speeds which defy long-term investment strategies. Competing with existing media TNCs and even threatening their existence may be a plethora of ‘micro-multinationals’, using the Internet and micro-financing to structure small yet global media companies on a previously impossible scale, with both employees and audiences scattered around the globe. Such a development, as proposed by economist Hal Varian, would level the playing field considerably and offer fresh employment opportunities for journalists, while at the same time creating a slew of complex legislative and regulatory problems.³⁹

Globalization has produced its discontents, not least the thousands of journalists worldwide whose careers have been curtailed by the rise of new media and the

³⁸ <http://www.themediabriefing.com/article/a-lack-of-foresight-media-predictions-that-missed-the-spot#sthash.BxvuNyN4.dpuf>, accessed 3 January 2013.

³⁹ See Varian, Hal, ‘Micromultinationals Will Run the World’, *Foreign Policy*, Sept/October 2011, at

http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/08/15/micromultinationals_will_run_the_world, accessed 14 March 2013.

cost savings of digitization. Yet the history of the media, in all its forms, has been one of risk and innovation, and constant change, reflecting the world around it; journalism is, after all, nothing more or less than the society at large, with louder headlines. At its best, the profession of journalism has aimed to explain the world in all its facets, to fearlessly uncover the truth, to spread knowledge and new ideas, and to forge links between diverse and often competing interests. Globalization of the media has offered new and exciting platforms for journalists to achieve these ambitions. It has also seen the demise of what were once considered central elements in the business of news and information. For better or worse, globalization is here to stay. The task in this century will be ensure that, as globalization continues to reshape the media market, journalism as a valued profession - and as a core element of democracy and free speech - survives, and that the resulting flow of information remains accessible to all. However globalization may help or hinder these aims, nothing can replace the power of the independent journalistic witness. In the words of BBC correspondent Allan Little:

Eye witness journalism is in one sense the purest and most decent work we do. It has the power to settle part of the argument, to close down propaganda, to challenge myth making. It is the first draft in the writing of history and, in itself, a primary source for future historians.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Little, Allan, q.v. Sambrook, Richard, op. cit., p. 102.