



UNIVERSITY OF OSLO
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

Theories of media and globalization

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Henry Mainsah - September 10th



Categorization of theories

Structural/economic theories:

Network society

Cultural imperialism

Cultural analysis:

Deterritorialization

Cosmopolitanism



Network society

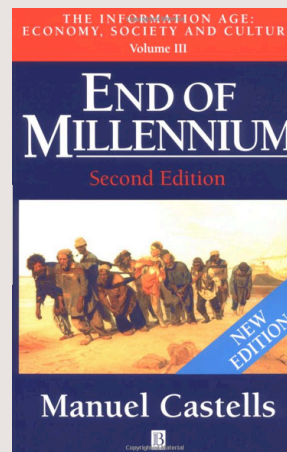
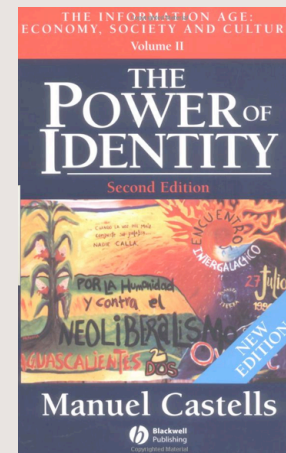
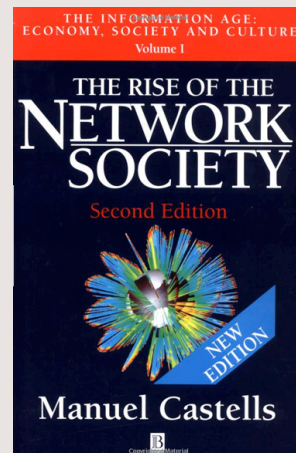


Proposed by **Manuel Castells**

- Professor of Communication/Sociology/Planning at USC
- World' 5th most cited social sciences scholar
- Foremost cited communications scholar



Network society - developed in three volumes





Network society

Focuses on a series of **fundamental changes in structure of society**.

- Based on the premise that society has changed to such an extent that one can talk of a new society fundamentally different. Castells offers articulated argument backed by empirical evidence of new kind of society.
- Recognizes the importance of both mass media and information technology in the process of transformation.
- Emergence of new economy characterized by three conditions: **informational, global, and structural change**.



New **global** economy

- Regional structure.
- A new international division of labor characterized by production of:
 - High value
 - Large quantities
 - Raw materials
 - Superfluous production
- Selective inclusion of certain areas
- Gives rise to a *fourth world* of people lacking economic value - perverse reintegration.



Informationalism

Incorporation of **information** in all in economic production and in society at large - knowledge-based productivity.

Information network economy saturates all forms of production - production of raw materials, manufacturing, service sector.

- simultaneous process of knowledge intensification of production in all forms.

Production in network society follows principle of flexible accumulation.

- break with "Fordism" -
- small units linked together in multiple networks spread globally
- Products tailored for different markets
- Expansion and reduction of scale - individual units of production smaller and at the same time conglomerates.



Change in structure of network society - “spaces of flows”

Time, place, and space

Network society operates on timeless time

Timeless time gives rise to cultural relativism

New relationship between elites and the people - a mobile upper class - a destitute lower class stranded in one place/vagabonds.

Spaces of flows - spaces that are created by and organized for the constant movement of people, goods, and information. Not only the the gradual extension of historical trends but a new space has been created with its on characteristics and dynamics

Space of network supported by three infrastructural strata:

- Electronic networks
- Micro networks for managerial elites - who develop common fora and cultures free of geographical constraints
- “Nodes” and “hubs”



Cultural imperialism

A macro-level analysis based on a political and economic analysis of a world system. Acknowledges the uneven character of a process where resources are scarcer in some societies compared to others.

Cultural Imperialism - popularized by Jeremy Tunstall who describes a situation in which “authentic traditional, local culture...is being battered out of existence by the indiscriminate dumping of large quantities of slick commercial and media products from the US(The Media are American: Anglo-American Media in the World, 1977: 57).

– McDonaldization - Ritzer (1996)

Media Imperialism - developed within broader analysis of cultural imperialism and dependency theories. Oliver Boyd-Barret defined it as “the process whereby the ownership, structure, distribution of content of the media in any one country are singly or together subject to substantial external pressures from the media interests of any other country or countries without proportionate reciprocation of influence by th country so affected” (1977: 117).

Critique of media imperialism: ...



Media Imperialism - counter arguments

Contra-flows: countries once thought of as major clients of media imperialism such as Mexico, Canada, Brazil have successfully exported their media products and personnel into the “Centre”. Mexico (Televisa Group), Brazil (TV Globo), Canada (CanWest) export music and TV programmes globally.

Regionalism: there is now greater exchange of news, TV programmes, print media, music between regions e.g. DSTV (South Africa), “Nollywood”(Nigeria, “Bollywood”(India), Star TV (Hong Kong), Al Jazeera(Quatar), Euronews(EU), Exchange of media products has also increased in Scandinavia.

Localization: local products remain popular and attract large audiences. People prefer to watch their own locally-made programmes.

Glocalization: term made popular by British sociologist Roland Robertson in the 1990s and later developed by Zygmunt Bauman. It is characterized by the global-local interaction, by cultural fusion as a result of the adaptation of Western media productgenres to suit local cultures.



Deterritorialization

Deterritorialization - the loss of the natural relation of culture to geographical and social territories.

- Reterritorialization - a situation in which people attempt to re-establish a new cultural home wherever they settle.

Meyrowitz (1986) - argues that electronic media, particularly TV, have led to a radical restructuring of social life by disrupting the traditional link between culture and geography, allowing people to escape from forms of identity formed by the relation between person and “symbolic space” identical with geographical locality.

Stuart Hall (1992) - suggests three possible consequences of globalization on cultural identities: **erosion**, **strengthening** and the emergence of **new identities**.

On the other hand:

Limits to extent to which identities can be free-floating and self-selected

Cultural globalization highly uneven - unequal power relations between “the west and the rest”

Revival of ethnic/religious fundamentalism



Cosmopolitanism

Hannerz (1990: 238) - cosmopolitanism as a “state of mind” and “a mode of managing meaning”. It involves a kind of orientation characterized by a willingness and an ability to engage with other cultures - an openness towards divergent cultural experiences, a search of contrast rather than uniformity.

Derrida (2001) - universalistic cosmopolitanism discourse - round humanistic values - universal human rights, crimes against humanity, forgiveness, repentance, confession, apology etc.

Transnational media's role: - providing people with experiences of other cultures. Media mediates cultures. As cosmopolitans read read media they translate between territorial, local, national and global cultures and identities.

Can there be cosmopolitans without locals?



Questions for reflection

In light of the new developments in global and national media, to what extent is the concept of “media imperialism” still relevant?

What forms of deterritorialization/cosmopolitanism can you perceive in your own societies?



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