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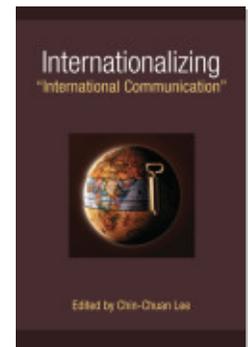Published by University of Michigan Press

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De-Westernization and Cosmopolitan Media Studies

Silvio Waisbord

James Curran and Myung-Jin Park's (2000) *De-Westernizing Media Studies* offered an eloquent, much-needed call to expand the geographical and intellectual frontiers of communication and media studies. It aimed "to contribute to a broadening of media theory and understanding in a way that takes account of the experience of countries outside the Anglo-American orbit" (Curran & Park, 2000, p. 11). Featuring a dozen chapters from around the world, the book makes a normative argument for why the field needs to be more inclusive and worldly. It stands as a prime example of the latest push toward the "internationalization" of media studies (Thussu, 2009). There is no shortage of studies published in English that examine recent changes in media systems (Fox & Waisbord, 2002; McCargo, 2008; Romano & Bromley, 2005; Sakr, 2007; Voltmer, 2006), journalistic practices (de Burgh, 2005), mediated politics (Lilleker & Lees-Marshment, 2005; Strömbäck & Kaid, 2008), and journalistic ethics (Ward & Wasserman, 2010) around the world. Amid "the globalization of everything," including academia during the 1990s, Curran and Park's volume makes a strong case for breaking away from academic parochialism. De-Westernization implies opening up analytical horizons by considering cases from around the world that are not known either due to language obstacles or disinterest. Given that the importance of the non-West is not news for non-Westerner scholars, Curran and Park's goal is primarily to encourage curiosity about other regions among Anglo-American researchers.

Since its inception, the field of media studies has had a distinctive Western, and particularly Anglo-American, accent. The field emerged out the convergence of theories and questions rooted in the tradition of the social sciences in the West during the inter-war period (Katz et al., 2003). Expectedly, the analytical focus and theories have been Western, and specifically U.S. theories. The Western-centric character of media studies is not surprising. Research questions that have dominated the field, such as media effects, journalistic practices, and media and public opinion, mainly reflected the priorities of scholars in the United States and western Europe who laid the foundations of the field. Likewise, theoretical frameworks were grounded in the epistemological premises and analytical traditions of political, psychological, and sociological theories developed in the West. Whereas the field has maintained its position as the meeting ground for interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research, it has been largely concentrated on issues relevant in the United States and fundamentally drew from Western social thought. Nor is the field of media studies unique in its Western centrism. Similar arguments have been made about the social sciences and humanities, particularly in recent years. Informed by multiculturalism, deconstructionism, and subaltern studies, scholars have criticized the Western focus and intellectual categories in social analysis (Rudolph, 2005).

Amid similar debates across academic disciplines, Curran and Park's book raises questions about the purpose, the strategies, and the academic politics of the "de-Westernization" of media studies. Is the goal to enrich the pool of studies published in English? Question the provincialism of the field? Promote theory-building that draws on a larger set of cases? What methodologies and analytical strategies are adequate to de-Westernize? Should it be through the institutionalization of non-Western research in Western academia? Should be it through the study of global questions and analysis? Who needs de-Westernization? Western and non-Western scholars alike? Is it a debate primarily relevant to Western academia? Or should it also apply to academic debates in the global South? These questions lack obvious answers.

In this chapter, my goal is to discuss the purpose and strategies of the "de-Westernization" of media studies. Given my particular interests in media studies, the analysis focuses on the study of the press and politics. The argument presented here is as follows. "De-Westernization" should nurture cosmopolitan scholarship characterized by sensitivity to comparative and global questions and approaches and engagement in globalized

debates. It not should lead to the balkanization of the field in "area studies" that cover various regions of the world. Instead, it should lead to the "de-centralization" of theories and research agendas in ways that foreground globalized perspectives and questions. De-Westernization is not simply about accommodating international research and perspectives in the field. Instead, it is about globalizing research in ways that foreground questions and arguments that draw from various media and political systems. Cosmopolitan media studies should be guided by theoretical and empirical questions that are relevant across geographical and academic borders.

Why Area Studies Are a Problematic Way to "De-Westernize" Media Studies

One could argue that "de-Westernization" of media studies should be accepted without hesitation. De-Westernization is unquestionably good and desirable. After all, who would argue that ignoring the world is fitting for academic life? An analytical mind open to the world defines intellectual work and academic imagination (Bourdieu, 1988; Mills, 1959). It is why cosmopolitanism, particularly in recent decades, has been celebrated (Appiah, 2007; Held, 1995). A worldly, inquisitive, curious mind embodies Immanuel Kant's understanding of cosmopolitanism as hospitality to foreigners. It is why provincialism is a pejorative adjective that conjures what academic minds should not be. It is why theorists believe that international education is critical for nurturing a cosmopolitan mind (Hansen, 2008; Nussbaum, 1996). Ignoring the majority of media systems in the world is unbecoming to intellectual openness. Yet to argue that the study of non-Western media is necessarily good is insufficient. The history of media research in the West amply demonstrates that the purpose of studying non-Western societies is ambiguous. The study of non-Western media has been driven by various and even opposite goals: to legitimize and promote Western ideals about press/media systems, to critically interrogate Western premises, and to explore other societies and media systems.

Because de-Westernization has ambiguous goals, it is important to clarify its purposes. De-Westernization should be more than an effort to make media studies in the West less parochial and more welcoming to research from around the world. The production of knowledge about non-Western media can coexist with an academic mind-set that remains unaware and untouched by global ideas and findings. In fact, both may develop in parallel without entering into a productive dialogue or challenging each other

to rethink premises and analytical foci. Neither the availability of non-Western cases in the West nor growing receptiveness to research about non-Western societies inevitably leads to abandoning provincialism or to revisiting prevalent paradigms.

This is why area studies as a strategy to integrate research from around the world in specific regional categories in a given discipline or field does not solve the main challenges of de-Westernization in media studies. During the Cold War years, the social sciences and humanities in the West engaged with the non-Western world under the rubric of area studies. Areas studies have been organized around geographical labels ("South Asian," "Middle Eastern") that assume commonalities among neighboring countries. So, "Latin American studies" tacitly assumes that countries south of the United States can be analyzed as a group under the assumption that they share common characteristics, such as political history, economics, and culture.[1]

The organization of knowledge about the "non-West" in area studies is fraught with problems. The main problem is not the division between "soft" empirical research ("area studies") and "hard" theory ("American" studies) (Bates, 1997; Franco, 1988; Graham & Kantor, 2007). Although such conclusions point out an extended, and unfortunate, perception, such generalizations unfairly portray the richness and diversity of such studies, and leave out several shortcomings. The crystallization of "international research" in "area studies" presents several problems. It replicates forms of conceptualizing academic knowledge through Western, geopolitical categories (Kratoska, Raben, & Schulte Nordholt, 2005; Nugent, 2010; Simpson, 1998; Szanton, 2004; Yudice, 2003). Area divisions perpetuate Western constructions of world regions ("Latin America," "Southeast Asia") that are linked for geopolitical, strategic reasons unrelated to analytical justifications. By building compartmentalized analytical categories, "area studies" also discourage dialogue and collaboration across regions. They tacitly relegate regional studies to the production of knowledge that informs and builds on models developed in the West. Finally, "area studies" reinforce the construction of the "non-West" as "the Other" (Harbeson, 1997; Rafael, 1994).

These criticisms point out to the problem of academic insularity and splintering—the construction of separate geographically bounded limits. Area studies produce findings that, even if they are of interest to regional specialists, may not be necessarily relevant to the field. Boxing up scholarship in clear-cut geographical categories is supported neither on theoretical

nor methodological distinctions. Typically, studies ask questions to understand the causes, characteristics, and consequences of specific national and regional media systems, journalistic practices, news coverage, and other subjects. As important as these issues are, they may not be directly relevant to the field at large if questions aren't linked to broad debates. "Thick descriptions" (Geertz, 1973) of individual case studies are of interest primarily to area specialists. They reinforce analytical compartmentalization grounded on geographical, and political, social, and cultural boundaries. Such an approach has limited impact on the field at large.

These limitations are found in works about non-Western cases that, although they discuss interesting questions, fail short of making theoretical arguments that are relevant to the field at large. Because they are framed as area studies, primarily concerned with local phenomena, they are disengaged from broad theoretical discussions. The result is a rich body of international literature with little impact on theoretical and conceptual debates that remain focused on "Western" issues. Area specialists primarily talk to fellow area specialists. They live in separate academic worlds even when, paradoxically, they may be interested in similar theoretical questions (e.g., the power of news frames, various types of agenda-setting effects, the impact of commercial media on political knowledge). Consequently, geographical divisions are not conducive to metatheoretical debates and intellectual cross-pollination.

This problem is manifested, for example, in edited volumes that showcase a diversity of world cases, but are not sufficiently engaged with common themes and questions. They contribute to internationalizing the field by making a wealth of cases available in English, yet they do not necessarily probe theoretical arguments or advance conclusions that build on Western scholarship. For Pippa Norris (2009), this is the problem of studies and books that offer a "grand tour" of the world, but fail to make theoretical contributions if they are not organized around broad and common questions. The problem is not the study of country cases per se; rather, it is a matter of how questions and findings are linked to large theoretical and empirical debates. The division of area studies leads to focusing on questions and arguments that, albeit relevant to specific regions, may not add to the body of knowledge in the field at large.

"Area studies" presents other challenges, too. It clusters research on presumed similarities among countries whereas those similarities actually need to be critically examined. It assumes essentialist visions that ascribe immanent similarities to geographical regions. Such regions are political

and academic constructions that ignore profound differences and similarities inside and across regions. In fact, this is what numerous country/regional studies show: the existence of important differences within geographical areas that make regional clusters questionable. Should South Africa be included with the rest of Africa? How about Mozambique, Kenya, and Senegal given different media legacies largely shaped by different colonial powers? Should China, Vietnam, and Cambodia be grouped together given their common communist history? Or should China be compared to the other BRIC economic powers of Brazil, Russia, and India? Should contemporary Russia be compared to other countries that feature "hybrid" political regimes between authoritarianism and democracy (e.g., Venezuela)? Should Lebanon, a country with the most open media system in the Middle East, be compared to monarchical media regimes in Morocco and Saudi Arabia? Should Indonesia be grouped with other countries with Muslim majorities? Should Brazil, a country with a strong tradition of market-driven media and journalistic practices inspired by the U.S. model of professionalism, be grouped with Latin American countries where those conditions are absent?

Asking questions about the logic of geographical groupings are also relevant to interrogate the binary division between "Western" and "non-Western" studies. Do we run the risk of essentializing countries, regions, and scholarship by continuing to establish differences between the West and the non-West (Godrej, 2009)? What is the non-West anyway? Arguably, the rationale for clustering dozens of countries together as the "non-West" is their geographical position as well as their presumably common relation to the West. Yet the justification for maintaining such a division is not obvious. Certainly, this dichotomy is found among defenders of "Western" traditions and geopolitics as well as among critics of "Western civilization." At a time when analytical and ideological categories (e.g., first/third worlds, core/periphery) that have dominated the social sciences during the past half a century are thrown into question, shouldn't we cautiously approach, or simply refrain from using, the "Western/non-Western" dyad?

How we answer these questions depends on what theoretical challenges are considered to be a priority in media studies. Even if regional groupings may be justified on the basis of common media history, language, colonial past, and political regimes, the problem is maintaining strong geo-analytical boundaries. Neat geographical divisions lose sight of the fact that theoretical questions should drive research agendas. Local and regional developments, inevitably, generate empirical questions. To name a

few, the relation between media and regime transition, the role of media in the rise of right-wing populism, and the impact of new media on political identities are questions that stem from concrete developments in particular countries and, unsurprisingly, are more relevant to some media/political systems. The problem lies in approaching questions solely in terms of empirical relevance without considering their significance for the field of media studies. Area divisions constrain scholars to maintaining conversations with other area specialists instead of making research relevant to scholars beyond geographical borders.

Another problem of area studies is the preservation of "methodological nationalism" (Beck, 2007; Beck & Sznaider, 2010), that is, the focus on "national" questions within the boundaries of modern states. Such questions, Beck argues, are not the most urgent or important at a time of planetary challenges and global consciousness and actions. "Methodological nationalism" ignores the fact that problems need to be reconceptualized amid globalization. The shift from local/national to global requires researchers to ask questions beyond political-geographical boundaries.

Beck unnecessarily downplays the persistent significance of nations and states as analytical units. The rise of planetary problems doesn't invalidate the significance of a host of issues that remain relevant at the local/domestic level. For example, despite increased globalization, media politics as well as models of media and politics (Hallin & Mancini, 2004) remain largely anchored in local and national dynamics. It's not a question of "either/or," but rather the need to remain attentive to questions at multiple levels. Yet Beck's call to think "globally" rightly raises questions about the need to expand analytical perspectives in media studies. Implicitly, it offers a much-needed corrective to the geographical narrowness of area studies. A perspective grounded in area studies does not tend to formulate questions in terms of global developments and trends. Rather, it tilts the analysis in favor of questions that are primarily relevant to local and national media politics.

In summary, area studies as a path to "de-Westernize" media studies runs the risk of reinforcing scholarly insularity and fragmentation. It assumes commonalities instead of examining the basis for geographical-analytical divisions. It maintains and encourages parallel debates. Case studies are necessary to foreground how theoretical questions and arguments play out in various contexts. Yet the fragmentation and solidification of "case expertise" in geographical differences is a deterrent to cross-regional, global debates.

Finally, "de-Westernizing" media studies in the direction of area studies is particularly wrongheaded at the present juncture of the field. It fails to address a basic challenge in both media studies and political communication: the lack of robust empirical generalizations and theoretical arguments based on a range of cases. Foundational and contemporary theories and arguments in the literature overwhelmingly draw from case studies on the United States and Britain. Broadening the analytical base is necessary to determine the strengths of propositions across media and political systems. In summary, besides the problems of essentialist and geopolitical premises, area studies reinforce academic insularity and parallel debates.

Cosmopolitan Media Studies

To avoid the limitations of area studies, I propose to embrace a cosmopolitan outlook to further "de-Westernize" media studies. Here cosmopolitanism is understood as an analytical attitude open to multiple perspectives and developments beyond geography.

The idea of academic cosmopolitanism builds on the recent "cosmopolitan" turn in the social sciences and humanities (Caney, 2005; Dallmayr, 2003; Held, 1995; Nussbaum, 1996). Cosmopolitanism is generally associated with contemporary normative theories that, drawing from classic and modern philosophy, outline the need for a moral commitment to justice, law, human rights, and politics that transcends conventional state borders. It champions cosmopolitan governance premised on the notion of world citizens and equal members of the global community. At a time of unprecedented mobility of people, ideas, and goods as well as the porosity of political, economic, and cultural borders, world citizenship offers responses to critical issues and urgent needs. Along these lines, media scholars (Chouliaraki, 2006; Silverstone, 2006) have made persuasive arguments for why the media play critical roles in nurturing cosmopolitan consciousness and citizenship.

Cosmopolitan media studies demands studying the world to enrich and challenge intellectual premises, categories, and conclusions. It starts from the present condition of a globalized, interconnected world as the basis for stimulating a cosmopolitan outlook (Fine, 2007). It is not synonymous with the aggregation of "case studies" from around the world. It is contrary to clear-cut geographical separations that reify "otherness" in the categories of "international" or "global." Cosmopolitan scholarship is not reduced to being hospitable to "international" research. Instead, it is a globalized

perspective that critically considers world differences to probe theoretical arguments and define empirical questions (also see Miller, 2009).

A cosmopolitan approach raises awareness about global differences and similarities (Ong, 2009). In a world characterized by interconnectedness and multiple flows (Appadurai, 2001; Giddens, 1990), it invites scholars to expand analytical horizons beyond the "comfort zone" of country borders. It promotes a global sensitivity guided by analytical questions and informed by research from around the world. It pushes for the globalization of knowledge and dialogue. It encourages country specialists to make broad theoretical and conceptual contributions.

Cosmopolitan media studies doesn't assume that borders, grounded in political, social, economic, and cultural differences, are irrelevant. Indeed, it assumes that they need to be taken into account to expand research agendas and produce arguments that examine differences and similarities. Contrasts across media and political systems, as well as their interactions, provide evidence to test conclusions. In doing so, cosmopolitan scholarship overcomes the limitations of theory-building based largely on Anglo-American scholarship. Because these countries have quite unique traditions of media and politics, casting a wider geographical net is indispensable to refine theories and arguments.

Cosmopolitan scholarship also contributes to a shift in the direction of knowledge flows. Like other social sciences (McFarlane, 2006), media studies has long been dominated by a one-way flow of "knowledge transfer" from the West (particularly U.S. and British scholarship) to the Rest. Such patterns are not only problematic for maintaining the primacy of theories and concepts produced in a few countries. They are also incongruous with the reality of multiple centers for academic production. Therefore, cosmopolitan scholarship seeks to rectify a lopsided flow of ideas by promoting more egalitarian global exchanges and debates.

I'm not proposing "cosmopolitan media studies" as a desirable academic identity, the equivalent of cosmopolitan citizenship in a world of increased mobility and fluidity. Nor I am suggesting that national borders are irrelevant to the study of media and politics on the assumption that they have been superseded by globalization and remain remnants of the old order. My argument is neither about normative citizenship ("a way of being in the academic world") nor the absolute preeminence of global questions. Rather, I propose cosmopolitan scholarship as an analytical perspective that prioritizes theoretical and critical thinking informed by international research and globalized dialogue. This approach is not simply consistent

with a globalized academic world and the current challenges of globalization. It is also necessary to overcome geographical divisions and bring together strands of research around common questions and arguments.

How to De-Westernize and Promote Cosmopolitanism

Just like philosophical and political arguments for cosmopolitanism, cosmopolitan scholarship raises questions about strategies. How is cosmopolitanism possible? What strategies may stimulate a globalized perspective in the field?

Fundamentally, cosmopolitan media studies is about placing local research in the context of global debates and developments, and engaging with conversations that transcend local interests and phenomena. It is not only about prioritizing research questions that transcend borders. More importantly, it is about shifting the way questions are asked and answers are formulated.

Here I propose three research strategies to pursue the "de-Westernization" of media studies along the lines of cosmopolitanism: address questions that are absent in the literature in the West, conduct comparative studies featuring non-Western cases, and analyze global phenomena that transcend geographical and regional boundaries.

Analyze Neglected Issues

The first option is to approach the global South as a rich trove of cases that have been generally ignored in the West. Given the West-centric nature of research agendas, important questions in the global South have not been at the forefront or even discussed in the West. The research agenda has remained largely, and expectedly, local or national. Consequently, the literature has empirical and theoretical blindspots that reflect the powerful influence of Western concerns and categories.

Here, I'll mention just a few examples. Press performance amid conditions of statelessness is not uncommon in large swaths of the world given the chronic problems of state instability and the power of para-state actors (Waisbord, 2007). The links between media and various forms of media populism (Mazzoleni, Stewart, & Horsfield, 2003) also takes on particular characteristics around the world. In countries dominated by authoritarian regimes or where governments exert powerful influence on media economics and access to information, journalists' strategies to navigate

government restrictions are different from the West (Lee & Chan, 2008). Worldwide, the role of religious values in the professional identity of journalists is different from the situation in secular Europe and the conventional norms of professional journalism in the United States. The impact of commercialism on state-controlled media systems is not identical to the much-discussed effects in Western countries (Porto, 2008; Sakr, 2007; Zhao, 1998). Media pluralism in societies with a long history of ethnic and religious conflicts may not be conducive to more democratic expression, but, instead, it deepens divisions and violence (Ismail & Deane, 2008). Different historical and philosophical traditions of civil society suggest that opportunities for citizens' participation in media policies and performance are different from the West (Rodríguez, 2001; Waisbord, 2010).

Because these issues aren't common either in the United States or Britain, or for that matter in the West, they are notoriously understudied in the English-language literature. The significance of such questions is not simply that they address key issues and dynamics in the global South. Also, they reveal questions that are theoretically important to understand the intersection between media and politics. They raise important questions about arguments at the core of the field such as freedom of expression and democratic communication; the interaction between media, states, and markets; the professional identity of journalists; and media models.

The purpose of studying these issues is not simply to demonstrate that "things are different" outside the West. Rather, the goal is to put the spotlight on issues that, because they are not common in the West, help us rethink arguments and broaden analytical horizons. To return to the previously mentioned examples: How to think about press freedom in situations where the state does not function? Does media tabloidization nurture populist attitudes and movements across political regimes and countries? Does commercialization have positive effects on media systems tightly controlled by governments? Does media pluralism necessarily contribute to more democratic expression or feed sectarianism and polarization? Is there a single model of professional journalism? Are the prospects for civic actors to promote media reforms widely different around the world? If so, why?

Conduct Comparative Research

Comparative research is another strategy to de-Westernize media studies in the spirit of cosmopolitan scholarship. In recent decades, interest in

comparative research in media and politics has grown considerably since Blumler and Gurevitch's (1975) seminal article. In an updated version of their original call for comparative research, Gurevitch and Blumler (2004, p. 327) argue that the importance of systematic comparison lies on the need "to understand how varying contexts (such as those generated by different types of state regimes and political institutions, cultural regions, levels of development, or media systems) shape processes of political communications." Recent studies (Esser & Pfetsch, 2004; Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Voltmer, 2008) have renewed interest in comparative research, and contributed to breaking away from past approaches that categorized media/press models in ideological terms (Siebert, Peterson & Schramm, 1956; for a critique, see Nerone, 1995). These studies shared the premise that conceptual and theoretical rigor requires conclusions informed by comparative analysis (also see Norris, 2009). Also, comparative research has been motivated by the need to break away from the "U.S.-centrism" of the literature. Because central arguments and theories in the literature reflect the singular characteristics of U.S. media and politics, it is necessary to probe the generalizability of those arguments and theories.

The main contribution of cross-national, comparative research is not just to make the field less parochial. As has been discussed in other disciplines, the comparative method yields stronger propositions and general theories that are relevant beyond particular contexts (Skocpol & Somers, 1980). Its main virtue is not to open up attention to different settings or to stimulate curiosity, but rather to provide more solid and nuanced theoretical conclusions.

Two types of comparative studies can be distinguished in the recent literature on media and politics. One type is implicitly comparative: studies examine the applicability of conclusions from one country (or media/political systems) to another without conducting country-to-country comparison. The other type is explicitly comparative: studies compare certain phenomena (e.g., news content, election campaigning, media impact on political knowledge) in two or more countries. Implicit comparisons mainly test the applicability of U.S.-based conclusions in other settings. Examples of such an approach are studies of the impact of news frames on political attitudes and participation (Aarts & Semetko, 2003; de Vreese & Semetko, 2002); the influence of political elites on news content (Archetti, 2008; Sheafer & Wolfsfeld, 2009); the impact of the nature of media systems on citizen information (Curran et al., 2010); the consequence of political communication systems on voter turnout (Baek, 2009), and the dynamics

of agenda setting and policy making (Baumgartner, Green-Pedersen, & Jones, 2006; Walgrave & Van Aelst, 2006). In contrast, explicit comparisons examine media and politics across two or more countries and explain differences and similarities. Recent examples are studies about news coverage of war and peace (Dimitrova & Stromback, 2005; Peng, 2008), immigration (Benson, 2010), media models (Hallin & Mancini, 2004), and presidential communication (Hallin & Mancini, 1984). The purpose of comparing news coverage, media systems, and the interaction between media and political systems and dynamics is to develop evidence-based, theoretical arguments that draw from more than one case.

These two types of comparative research have produced novel insights and refined previous arguments. For example, they have questioned the applicability of conclusions about a necessary link among news, cynicism, and participation that was originally developed in the United States. In the context of different media and elections, cynical frames do not necessarily suppress participation or fuel political cynicism (de Vreese & Semetko, 2002). Also, they have produced eloquent evidence showing that the public or commercial nature of media systems affects the quality of news and information levels among citizens (Curran et al., 2010). Similarly, cross-national analysis of news coverage of immigration, war, antiwar movements, and scandals (Canel & Sanders, 2006) suggests that the unique characteristics of media and political systems as well as the interaction between them do affect content (Dimitrova & Stromback, 2005; Peng, 2008). Since variation at the system level is most clearly seen via cross-national comparative studies, international research is best positioned to build more generalizable theory about the production of journalistically mediated political discourse.

The recent crop of comparative studies in political communication is overwhelmingly focused on the West. They typically test the applicability of arguments originally made in the U.S. context in European countries, or, alternately, compare developments and trends across Europe. This pattern is not surprising given the preeminent position of U.S.-based research in communication/media studies and political communication in particular. Also, geographical proximity coupled with regional academic networks and funding agencies has facilitated cross-national research in Europe. The fact that many European academics write fluently in English coupled with incentives in European universities (Lillis & Curry, 2010) to publish English-language journal articles and books has also stimulated comparative research.

Yet it would be mistaken to attribute this pattern only to the presence of pan-European academic networks and the global position of U.S. academia. One could reasonably suggest that the Western focus of recent comparative studies also reflects the fact that U.S./western European cases lend themselves better to comparative research. They seemingly meet key conditions for comparative cross-national studies, namely, to apply John Stuart Mill's) method of agreement and difference presented in *A System of Logic* (1843). The existence of "party-press" parallelism, public broadcasting systems, the tabloid press, and parliamentary systems make European countries fertile settings for cross-national comparisons. Also, the presence of common elements (e.g., stable democracies, common philosophical traditions) and important differences (media systems, political systems) on both sides of the North Atlantic facilitate comparisons between U.S. and European countries.

Comparing Western and non-Western cases presents more challenges. Not only do more variations have to be accounted for but significant similarities are harder to find. Comparative studies should select cases that are sufficiently similar yet different rather than focus on cases that are vastly different (Przeworski & Teune, 1970). Countries that are too different make it difficult to produce parsimonious arguments that control for possible variations and causal relations. This challenge is more difficult to address for explicit than for implicit comparisons. Comparisons between countries with substantially different media as well as political histories and dynamics have trouble accounting for multiple factors that explain differences or similarities. Instead, research designs that conduct implicit comparisons ("do conclusions based on country X apply to country Y?") can resolve that challenge more effectively.

Applied to non-Western contexts, implicit comparisons may provide fresh insights into questions and arguments that have dominated the study of media and politics in the West. Does the news media promote a "virtuous circle" (Norris, 2000) by stimulating political interest and participation across democracies? Do political elites consistently exercise similar power in indexing news (Bennett, 2005) across issues and countries? Does elite-dominated news consistently reduce the range of public issues and citizens' voices? Does soft news stimulate political interest among young citizens? Do new media (from cable television to "social media") exacerbate political polarization? What factors influence news coverage of terrorism? How do new social movements use new information technologies to voice demands and advance political goals? Do different media promote or suppress po-

litical participation? Do "post-broadcast" media (Prior, 2007) reinforce inequalities in access to political information? Why is the apparent crisis of newspapers and journalism in the United States less pronounced in many countries in the South? How do civic associations make news? How does civil society shape processes of media reform?

In summary, recent case studies that test the applicability of propositions produced in other political-media settings as well as comparative research conducted in Europe show two fruitful strategies for de-Westernization. Both research designs share an interest in exploring whether and why "context matters" to explain similarities and differences in the interaction between media and politics. They show the usefulness of case studies and small-N comparisons to refine theoretical conclusions.

Analyze Trans-Border, Global Questions

A third approach to de-Westernizing is to analyze empirical questions that transcend national and regional boundaries. These are trans-border, global issues that are seldom foregrounded in local/national case studies. By studying a phenomenon or process at a global scale, research highlights commonalities and differences, and explores causes, characteristics, and consequences.

One possible line of research is to study "global media events" that either deliberately or unexpectedly transcend local borders. "Planned" global media events (Dayan & Katz, 1992)—for example, the Olympics, the World Cup, U.S. presidential inaugurations, coronations, state funerals—which are designed to be experienced by astonishingly large audiences, raise interesting questions about the dynamics of media globalization, audience interpretations, the nexus between the local and the global, and the politics of news coverage. In contrast, "unplanned" media events are news that transcend the political/media boundaries of one country and become the subject of coverage and discussion worldwide. The "Mohammed cartoon crisis" (Eide, Kunelius, & Phillips, 2008) is one recent example. What initially was a local news event quickly became global. Global press coverage, reaction, and the political aftermath brought up important questions about global journalistic ethics, international news, and public diplomacy. Given that any media content may "go viral" and global on the Internet, such news events are likely to become regular features of globalized media politics.

Another set of "global questions" refer to planetary developments, that

is, trends and phenomena that are not limited to one country or region. Recent examples include the globalization of news practices and ideals (Cohen et al., 1996); the "modernization/Americanization" of politics (Scammell, 1998; Swanson & Mancini, 1996); the "mediatization of politics" (Canel & Sanders, 2006; Strömbäck, 2008); the personalization of politics (McAllister, 2007); the professionalization of politics (Esser, Reinemann, & Fan, 2001; Holtz-Bacha et al., 2007); media populism (Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999); the adoption of similar communication strategies by insurrectionary groups across the world (Bob, 2005); and the use of mobile telephony and other new informational platforms for civic participation (Aday & Livingston, 2008). Because these developments transcend the national boundaries of political and media systems, they need to be examined across borders. If they are not unique to one national media-political system, then it is reasonable to presume that globalizing dynamics underlie those processes.

This line of research shows that both the forces of homogenization and heterogenization are at work. Similar developments across media and political systems may have comparable causes but they do not necessarily have identical consequences. Instead, they reflect how global events and trends, disseminated by transnational institutions and technologies, play into local and national dynamics. Similar trends (e.g., media commercialization, the crisis of political parties, dumbed-down news) facilitate the rise of similar processes worldwide. Yet they are integrated within specific processes anchored in the logic of local media and political institutions.

In summary, the three lines of research presented in this section are possible strategies to "de-Westernize" media studies and promote cosmopolitan scholarship.

Globalization and Cosmopolitan Media Studies

Academic politics, however, may not strongly favor cosmopolitan scholarship. Despite academic enthusiasm for cosmopolitanism and the globalization of scholarship, cosmopolitan perspectives do not easily fit the conventions of academic research. The turn to cosmopolitanism may not necessarily lead to significant epistemological shifts or serious questioning of the premises of media studies. Undoubtedly, globalization has facilitated communication and academic links from around the world. The global networks of academic knowledge, such as information technologies, professional institutions, and international meetings, ease up connectivity. Such processes, however, does not necessarily motivate the major analytical

and research shifts envisioned by Beck. Such processes bring new impetus and add novel questions to academic agendas, yet this is far from causing scholars to reconsider research and theoretical approaches. Cosmopolitan media studies bump up against the realities of academic work, namely, the persistent pull of local/national studies.

Locality continues to provide strong incentives for selecting topics, adopting perspectives, and framing academic research. Geographical proximity, research opportunities, language, and existing professional networks tilt research toward local and national issues. The "case study" approach to analyzing questions within the confines of the "nation-state," the dominant analytical unit of modern social thought (Gerring, 2007), remains enormously attractive. It is questionable whether cosmopolitan scholarship supersedes "national" approaches or, instead, produces important yet limited changes in the conceptualization of research questions. A globalized academia, as an interconnected community of world scholars, is compatible with the preeminence of local and national questions.

The other challenge is that inequalities in the global production of academic knowledge continue to stack the deck in favor of scholarship about U.S., and to a lesser extent, European media politics. The primacy of English as the lingua franca of global academia, the staggering amount of research produced in the United States, and well-established North-to-South flows of knowledge foreground research about the U.S. media and politics. Specialists in media and politics in the West may not find it necessary to globalize research interests or interrogate analytical approaches as long as the examination of developments and evidence in the West is deemed sufficient to produce relevant knowledge. Notwithstanding academic globalization, research agendas may still have a strong Anglo-American flavor and limit the impact of cosmopolitan scholarship. Given the weight of local factors in determining research agendas and the continuous presence of preceding flows of academic knowledge, the call to "de-Westernization" may powerfully resonate with media scholars in the West and the rest of the world, yet it may lead to major renovation of research priorities.

These challenges make it necessary to stimulate cosmopolitan perspectives through platforms that shape academic production and research agendas. Professional associations, funding agencies, academic curricula, journals, and book series need to stimulate globalized debates and research in ways that contribute to strengthening media theory. To be clear, I am not suggesting that only global questions push analytical horizons and produce better theory. Geographical scope neither determines the quality nor the

theoretical relevance of the contributions. "Case expertise" remains critical to probe and flesh out theoretical propositions, and determine whether and how "context matters" in mediated politics. At the present juncture, however, a cosmopolitan outlook is necessary to "de-Westernize" media studies. Studying cases engaged with broad theoretical discussions, conducting comparative, cross-national research, and analyzing global developments and trends may, hopefully, make the field more inclusive and produce more nuanced propositions.

Conclusions

Unquestionably, the field of media studies has become less U.S.-centric in the last two decades. Renewed interest among European researchers has largely helped to probe conclusions originally developed in the United States. Ongoing collaboration among professional and individual networks and support from European Union agencies and foundations continue to drive this trend in promising directions (e.g., Koopmans and Statham, 2010). Simultaneously, the steady publication of "international studies" in books and journals has expanded the availability of "non-Western" cases in English.

Further cross-regional dialogue and collaboration is necessary. In a globalized world, "area studies" is not conducive to multiple-way conversations, but rather it solidifies inward-looking debates. Cosmopolitan scholarship, instead, offers an alternative that will further decentralize the field and facilitate collaboration around common theoretical and empirical questions. Yet cosmopolitan media studies requires institutional conditions that are not strongly developed yet. Moreover, funding sources, language barriers, and geographical distance limit the potential of globalized research. It is imperative to discuss ways to make media studies not only more receptive but also more engaged with arguments and perspectives from around the world.

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NOTE

1. Arguably, area studies never achieved the same level of institutionalization in media studies as in other disciplines such as political science, history, and literature in the United States during the past half century. The analysis of this issue falls outside the scope of this paper, and needs further attention. Three reasons should be explored: the "late" development of communication/media studies compared to other disciplines and fields in the social sciences and humanities, the different power of various disciplines in leading universities, and the amount of public and private funding received from foundations and government agencies channeled to the development of areas studies after World War II.