

Chapter 11

Conclusions: The implications for cultural policies

A wealth of evidence has documented the growth of more cosmopolitan communications. The international market for cultural goods and services expanded rapidly during the late twentieth century and these massive changes have contributed towards faster and denser flows of information over national borders. Until the early-1980s, in most countries, the majority of the contents of mass communications were mainly domestically-generated, conveyed by local, regional or national newspapers, magazines, television stations, and radio networks. The globalization of mass communications was driven by the spread of technological innovations, through satellite and cable TV, cellular mobile telephones, the rise of the internet and World Wide Web, and the process of multi-media convergence. Mobile cellular phones with data services have been particularly important for expanding access in emerging economies. Privatization, deregulation and liberalization of the broadcasting and telecommunications sectors, and a relaxation of the rules limiting foreign media ownership, also played a major role, leading to a declining share of the audience for state or public service broadcasting channels, the proliferation of commercial (privately-owned) radio and television stations, and cross-media ownership in newspapers and magazines. These developments also encouraged the growth of international advertising companies and the market research sector, producing the revenue stream for commercial media outlets. New TV channels fuelled growing demand for program contents to fill the hours of broadcasting. Some programs were domestically-generated but much popular entertainment was imported from a few core Western producer countries, especially in countries which lacked the domestic market volume, technical skills, or investment for high quality productions in media industries. The cultural trade in global markets, documented in detail in chapter 3, shows that, far from decreasing, America's market share of world cultural trade in audiovisual goods and information services has expanded in recent decades. Moreover within the core producer countries, exports of cultural goods and services in world markets are highly concentrated in a handful of multinational conglomerates -- led by major companies such as Time Warner, Viacom and Disney -- which distribute multiple products across media platforms, including transnational news shown on satellite and cable TV stations, news wire services, movies, recorded music, book publishing, and online websites.

Scenarios about the consequence of cosmopolitan communications

These major developments are not in question. No consensus, however, surrounds the consequences arising from the modern rise of cosmopolitan communications. Considerable speculation has been generated, although few systematic empirical studies have attempted to analyze evidence for the impact of these developments on social values and attitudes.¹ The cultural implications of cosmopolitan communications have usually been debated in the light of three alternative scenarios, predicting convergence, polarization, or fusion, each proposing alternative visions for contemporary developments and future trends.² To counter these viewpoints, we have offered a more cautious interpretation, emphasizing the importance of a progressive series of firewalls in a sequence conditioning the impact of cosmopolitan communications and, even in the most open global markets, limiting the degree of convergence among diverse national cultures.

Convergence around American/Western values?

The first scenario suggests that the expansion of global communications has gradually standardized cultures commonly found around the world. The convergence thesis emphasizes that the outcome of these denser inter-connections is not simply a *mélange* mixing together all national cultures, analogous to the United Nations General Assembly. Instead the asymmetrical flow of the trade in cultural products and services means that cultural products - entertainment, news, and advertizing - are exported disproportionately from the global North to the South. In these circumstances, this scenario predicts that developing societies with open borders and with growing access to mass communications, which import much of their news information, popular TV entertainment and movies from abroad, will gradually come to absorb American/Western values, attitudes, and beliefs.

Normative battles about the pros and cons of these developments are fiercely debated. For many observers, this process represents a potential threat to national diversity, capable of wiping out minority languages, historical traditions, and indigenous belief-systems, just as uncontrolled tourism eradicates fragile environments. The cultural imperialism school, in particular, has long feared that the expansion of global communications will expose indigenous cultures in developing societies to a sudden flood of commercialism, advertising, and corporate capitalism, as well as popular American entertainment dominated by graphical violence and explicit sexuality. In this view, globalization threatens cultural diversity.³ For some other observers, however, such as American proponents of 'soft power', this process can be regarded in a more positive light, if it encourages the gradual diffusion of public support for universal principles agreed by the international community, such as the values

embodied in the 2005 World Summit Declaration where all governments pledged to uphold and respect the principles of freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, and human rights.⁴

Or global polarization?

Whether the world is converging towards a common culture has been challenged, however, by the polarization argument. In this perspective, the loss of national autonomy associated with globalization is capable of generating local resistance and counter-movements, catalyzing new culture wars between and within societies. The rise and penetration of a global culture can be perceived as a potent threat to traditional societies, engendering stronger tribal loyalties and heightened ethnic identities.⁵ Benjamin Barber articulated this argument most clearly when he suggested that the global spread of new technologies, mass popular entertainment, and consumerism would lead towards McWorld: where Disney, CNN, and Coke create a uniform culture around the world more powerful than the forces of military conquest, but at the same time the simultaneous reaction against globalization would catalyze the forces of Jihad, representing a resurgence of tribal and local identities.⁶ The events of 9/11 led many commentators to give credence to this interpretation, where hatred of American consumer materialism, sexual liberalization, and lack of respect for historical traditions and family values, was believed to fuel the backlash and anger represented by supporters of Al Qaeda in the Middle East, as well as a triggering a broader ground-swell of public support for Islamic fundamentalism.⁷ Digital technologies break down physical barriers among societies and peoples, but they also expand opportunities for communication among dispersed terrorist cells, as well as providing mechanisms for distributing alternative propaganda. Moderate social movements can also be understood to represent diverse reactions against cultural globalization, exemplified by the growing market for Mecca Cola in the Middle East, the slow food movement promoting artisanal cuisines,⁸ and street protests against meetings of the G8 and the World Trade Organization.⁹

The polarization scenario predicts that exposure to the Western culture contained in the global media will not necessarily encourage emulation; instead, the values and lifestyles embodied in the news media and in popular entertainment will lead towards rejection, and perhaps even provoke a backlash, in deeply conservative traditional societies which are offended by the ideas and images of explicit sexuality and violence, consumer materialism, and the liberal morality conveyed in much imported news, entertainment and advertizing. Moreover the picture is complicated by the fact that both convergence and polarization may be occurring simultaneously among different social sectors; for example the affluent governing elites and intellectuals in Karachi, Rio, and Manila, educated in Oxford

and Harvard, equally at home in London, New York and Paris, consuming *The Economist*, CNN and BBC World, may come to share a similar weltanschauung to their counter-parts living in Europe or North America. At the same time, this process may generate a growing rift between cosmopolitan elites and more conservative groups living in poorer rural communities within each society.

Or multicultural fusion?

Lastly, the fusion or hybridization thesis argues that globalization encourages a blending of diverse cultural traditions through cross-border fertilization and borrowing. Mutual exchanges may lead towards a mixture of music, art, foods, and languages, where locally-sensitive marketing leads to variations in packaging and products, and where American planes export eco-tourists and fly back Colombian roses, Kenyan snow peas, and Turkish rugs. Rather than a one-way flow, this perspective suggests multiple complex counter-currents, symbolized by the cosmopolitan mix of immigrant communities, foods, musics, and life-styles found in contemporary urban neighborhoods in London, Paris or LA.¹⁰ Indeed President Barack Hussein Obama, born in Honolulu to a Kenyan father and Kansas mother, educated in Jakarta, L.A., New York, and Harvard, is a perfect icon for this process. The blending of alternative cultures into a new cosmopolitan amalgam is believed to generate values, attitudes and lifestyles which are neither traditional nor modern, but an unpredictable intermingling of both. The fusion thesis suggests that this process alters and transforms cultures in post-industrial societies, for example heightening domestic nationalistic sensitivities with conflict over religious cartoons in Denmark and bans on the use of headscarves in French schools, as well as altering cultures in developing nations, for example through the growth of economic development and tourism transforming Mexican border towns.

Pro-globalization arguments favoring the free marketplace of ideas

Debate continues within the academy about the interpretation of developments and, in broader circles, within the international community about the policy implications arising from the growth of cosmopolitan communications.¹¹ On one hand, pro-globalists regard competition in the free marketplace of ideas, and the unrestricted flows of information and communications across national borders, as desirable for many reasons.¹² In particular, numerous beneficial effects are thought to follow from connecting the world more closely and shrinking digital divides in access to information and new ICTs, not least the potential for economic, political, and social development.¹³ The possible economic advantages include generating growth and reducing poverty through connecting remote

populations and workforces with global markets, as well as facilitating the greater efficiencies and productivity generated by the knowledge economy.¹⁴ Stronger connections between countries and continents can spread new ideas in previously-isolated developing societies, spurring innovations in science and technology, health-care, agriculture, and education. Politically, the use of the internet and computers for e-governance can improve the capacity of the state to deliver services to far flung areas, as well as facilitating democratic channels of participation and communication connecting citizens and the state.¹⁵ The scrutiny of government by investigative journalists working in the traditional news media can strengthen the accountability of public officials, using the disinfectant of transparency to reduce corruption and abuses of power by the state.¹⁶ Access to information can also strengthen transitions to democratic governance by spreading ideas and awareness about the internationally-agreed principles of human rights. For peoples living under repressive regimes with poor human rights records, access to political information from abroad can serve to strengthen opposition movements and demands for political reform at home. Expanding access to information provides an important learning resource for rural schools and health clinics, connecting isolated communities to doctors, libraries, and markets. Better information also makes states, publics and world leaders more aware of international disasters and humanitarian emergencies, potentially influencing the distribution of development aid and timely relief efforts.¹⁷

For all these reasons, the international development community has long sought to maximize access to information and communications in low and middle income societies. For pro-globalists, more cosmopolitan communications is therefore regarded as a positive opportunity for societal development, with the potential capacity to strengthen international understanding among peoples, to expand economic growth in international markets, and to diffuse ideas about democracy and human rights among societies, peoples and governments. In this view, it follows that decision-makers should encourage policies designed to promote the unrestricted exchange of cultural goods and services and the free flow of information across territorial borders, for example by lifting the remaining trade barriers and tariffs, encouraging investment in digital technologies, communication infrastructure, and human capacity in developing societies, shrinking societal disparities in Internet access, expanding freedom of expression and rights to information, and further deregulating the broadcasting and telecommunications sectors.¹⁸

Anti-globalization arguments for protectionist cultural policies

Yet anti-globalists express darker visions and anticipate more negative consequences arising from these developments, particularly if convergence around Western/American values means the loss of traditional indigenous cultures and a reduction in the diversity of minority languages, customs and local traditions found around the globe. In particular, following broadcasting de-regulation, the spread of commercial advertising and 30-second TV ads is often feared to encourage the pursuit of materialistic desires for the accumulation of consumer products throughout poorer societies, undermining spiritual values. This process is also commonly charged with opening the floodgates to a 'vast wasteland' of mindless American popular entertainment, encouraging people in traditional cultures, such as Bhutan, to emulate the gratuitous violence and easy-going sexuality depicted on the screen. For anti-globalists who regard cultural diversity as under threat from these developments, it follows that the international community and national decision-makers should implement policies designed to protect and regulate the cultural marketplace, for example by restricting the degree of foreign ownership of telecommunications and domestic media industries, regulating or limiting the importation of cultural products, regulating broadcasting and telecommunications in the public interest, and encouraging or subsidizing domestic creative industries, such as the performing arts, films, and public TV channels.

The debate about the need for cultural protectionism has been revived in the last decade, with new initiatives undertaken by multilateral agencies such as the European Union and UNESCO, although there is nothing particularly novel about these concerns. In 1973, Herbert Schiller argued that the disproportionate flow of information from Northern core to Southern periphery could be understood as a form of 'cultural imperialism', eradicating other ways of thinking and living in developing societies and reinforcing the influence of the Western powers and corporate capitalism.¹⁹ During this era, Schiller and others accused the media of 'cultural imperialism' and dependency theory argued that journalists in developing societies were over-reliant on imported media products and news wire services.²⁰ These issues fuelled the heated UNESCO controversy that erupted in 1980, focusing attention upon the North-South imbalance of communication flows, leading to publication of the MacBride Report.²¹ The attempt to build a New World Information Order, reforming the concentration and commercialization of the media, and opening more equal access to information and communications for developing societies, evoked concerns that it would facilitate state control of the media and proved so controversial that it divided the organization and it eventually led the United States and the United Kingdom to quit UNESCO.

Concern about the need to preserve and protect cultural diversity against the global media is not limited to trends facing developing societies. Even within the wealthy European Union, protectionists led by the French have argued that the unrestricted flow of mass communications across national borders encourages a homogenous European landscape dominated by American popular entertainment. This process is believed to contribute towards the extinction of smaller film industries and independent broadcasters, such as those in Italy, France or Romania, struggling to find an art-house niche for their products. Concern about this issue was expressed in European worries, especially prevalent in France, about the potentially damaging effects to cultural diversity if the transatlantic flow of entertainment products remained too one-sidedly American.²² The protectionist movement within Europe led to the 1989 European Union *Television without Borders* directive, which required that EU member-states reserve a majority of entertainment broadcast transmission time for programs of European origin.²³ To comply and implement the directive, governments have imposed protectionist quotas limiting the proportion of non-European television entertainment and feature films that can be imported. In addition to legal regulations, many European countries have also often heavily subsidized their domestic visual and performing arts and audiovisual industries, and some have also limited the degree of overseas ownership of newspapers and broadcasting licenses. The Council of Europe's *'Recommendation on measures to promote media pluralism'*, and Article 151 EC of the Maastricht Treaty, were also designed to encourage European broadcasters to ensure a certain amount of domestically-produced programming. The efficiency of these legal instruments has to be set against a context of increasing deregulation of the trade in goods and services and the telecommunications industry, which has expanded the number of private channels available in Europe, many of which rely on a diet of low-cost American television entertainment and movies.

More recently, under UNESCO's leadership, in 2001 the world's governments accepted a *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity*, which recognized that cultural diversity reflected our common heritage and should be preserved as a source of exchange, innovation and creativity.²⁴ Cultural diversity is seen by the Declaration as part of our common heritage, as necessary as biodiversity is for nature. The Declaration lays down an action plan with general guidelines which need to be implemented by member states, in partnership with civil society. Culture is conceptualized comprehensively by the convention to cover not just art and literature but also lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs. The agreement recognizes that freedom of expression and media freedom are necessary conditions for cultural diversity to flourish. Nevertheless it warns that, given globalization, market forces, by themselves, are insufficient to preserve and protect cultural diversity: "In the face of

current imbalances in flows and exchanges of cultural goods and services at the global level, it is necessary to reinforce international cooperation and solidarity aimed at enabling all countries, especially developing countries and countries in transition, to establish cultural industries that are viable and competitive at national and international level.”²⁵

Beyond generalities, however, the action plan is cautious about how this is best implemented, leaving it up to each state to determine the most appropriate policies which achieve the optimal balance between securing rights to freedom of expression and protecting our cultural heritage. The agreement specifies a number of steps, for example through fostering the sharing of knowledge and best practices about cultural diversity, supporting cultural industries in developing countries, and encouraging the preservation of a diversity of languages in cyberspace. More concretely, the Action Plan specifies that public service broadcasters should play an important positive role in this process: “Member states should encourage the production, safeguarding and dissemination of diversified contents in the media and global information networks and, to that end, promoting the role of public radio and television services in the development of audiovisual productions of good quality, in particular by fostering the establishment of cooperative mechanisms to facilitate their distribution.” Given the UN’s commitment to recognize and strengthen human rights and freedom of expression, the Universal Declaration does not explicitly come out in favor of more stringent protectionist measures, such as the use of trade barriers or broadcasting regulations designed to limit cultural imports or restrict foreign ownership of media industries. Spurred in part by this agreement, recently UNESCO has also developed new initiatives designed to standardize and monitor international statistics concerning the creative industries, including the production and distribution of feature films, newspapers, and radio and television broadcasting. This is a welcome development in an area which has often been neglected in the past, with international statistical series which are often seriously dated and incomplete in coverage.²⁶

The firewall theory of conditional effects

But is cultural diversity actually under serious threat, requiring protection? In contrast to each of the usual suspects commonly heard in debate, the firewall thesis developed throughout this book suggests that distinctive identities, values, and ways of life in each society are more deep-rooted and resilient to the impact of the global culture than is often expected. After all, we learn about the world and society from multiple sources of information, not just from the images and ideas conveyed in TV, movies, or newspapers. Over-simple ‘stimulus-response’ theories of ‘hypodermic’ media effects, a relic from earlier eras, are now badly out of date in modern communication studies.²⁷ Writers such as

Benedict Anderson have emphasized that national cultures and collective identities are powerfully shaped by common histories, shared languages, and deep-rooted religious traditions, which persist for centuries.²⁸ In the same way, socialization theories have long suggested that once enduring beliefs and core values are acquired early in life from personal interactions with parents and family, teachers and spiritual authorities, and friends and neighbors in the local community, as well as directly from formative experiences of living conditions, these may persist for a lifetime, irrespective of the fleeting impact of mass communications.²⁹ Ideas about the most appropriate activities for women and men in the home and workforce, attitudes towards the economic role of the state and markets, feelings about civic engagement and beliefs about spiritual life are derived from multiple sources. The mass media is one agent of socialization – and we have demonstrated that significant cultural effects arise from habitual use of the news media. But the mass media affects and changes values in all societies, rich and poor. Culture in post-industrial societies is fluid rather than static, and it too is evolving over time. Moreover the images and ideas conveyed by the mass media, even on a repeated basis, are only part of a broader learning process by which values are acquired, and social psychological filters based on existing predispositions may restrict the acquisition of new ideas which go against deeply-held beliefs and ingrained values, as well as reinterpreting the meaning of cultural messages.³⁰ To summarize and conclude, let us review the formal propositions which were outlined in chapter 2 and consider how far these have or have not been supported by the evidence. Table 11.1 provides a synopsis of the testable hypothesis at the heart of this book, focusing upon analyzing variations by types of users, types of values, types of media, types of societies, and value change over time.

[Table 11.1 about here]

Type of users

The first set of propositions suggested that individual use of the news media will differ by social sector; this is hardly a controversial assumption, as the research literature has typically reported that use of the news media is concentrated among the more educated sectors of the population, who have the cognitive skills, literacy, and background knowledge to make sense of news, and among high-income households, who often have greater leisure time and also the affluence necessary to buy equipment and access media services, such as pay-TV, satellite and cable broadcasts, mobile phones with data services, and broadband ISP. The digital divide in internet access attracted considerable attention during the mid to late-1990s, with the growth of the World Wide Web, but in fact it reflects broader and more enduring social and international disparities in access to traditional mass media, including newspapers, radio and

television news.³¹ Differences by gender and age have also commonly been observed in patterns of media access and attention in the US and Europe, leading to the proposition that use of the news media will be greater among men and among the middle-aged or older generations. Lastly the ubiquity of English websites, and the predominance of Anglo-American countries as exporters of audiovisual products and publications, also led to the expectation that use of the news media will be greater among those fluent in English. These are all reasonable propositions based on the literature, which is largely based on research conducted in post-industrial societies.³² Nevertheless they are worth testing to see whether these disparities persist today and whether similar or even stronger information gaps are evident in developing societies, as well as to identify the most suitable controls to incorporate into the subsequent analysis of media effects.

Chapter 4 explored the evidence from the 5th wave of the WVS in 2005-7 for which sectors of the population commonly use the news media - including newspapers, radio/TV news, the internet, books and magazines - in a wide range of contemporary societies. The evidence demonstrated, not surprisingly, the existence of major societal level barriers in access to information. More unexpectedly, cross-national comparisons of societal-level access to the internet, telephones, television and even radio indicate that disparities between rich and poor countries are deepening, not converging, during recent decades. In addition, again confirming the research literature, substantial information gaps remain among sectors and individuals living *within* societies. The individual-level regression models in Table 4.3 suggest that the primary drivers of patterns of media use for news and information about society and the world include the importance of the cognitive skills that come with education (H#1.1), the material resources of household income required to purchase TVs, computers and internet access, and also motivational interest (H#1.2). The profile by occupational class further confirmed and reflected the income differentials. The news audience does not reflect the general population; it has a clear skew towards educated and affluent segments of the population.

This imbalance varied by the type of media: Table 4.4 demonstrated that it is clearest for users of the internet and newspapers, media with the highest demands for cognitive skills and literacy, while the audience for radio/TV news is slightly broader although still socially biased towards more affluent and educated social sectors. The age profile did not confirm our priors, however, with the younger generation proving significantly more likely to use the news media across all types of economies (H#1.3). Further analysis broken down by type of media suggests that the inclusion of the internet/email as well as traditional news media seems likely to have contributed towards this pattern. Moreover in

developing nations, the younger generation is also typically more educated and literate than older populations. The traditional gender gap that we expected (H#1.4) was found to reverse by type of economy, with women predominating in the news media audience in rich nations but men predominating in low-income societies. Those familiar with English language also used the news media more than average (H#1.5), as did those with the motivational attitudes of political interest and trust in the news media. Before we examine the impact of exposure to news on attitudes and values, throughout the book we therefore need to control for the prior demographic and social characteristics of the audience.

Type of values

The second set of propositions predicted that the direct effects of individual patterns of news media use would generate more modern cultural values. What aspects of public opinion are commonly expected to change as a result of media exposure? Access to information about other peoples and places acquired from the global media can reasonably be expected to alter perceptions of territorial identities, by weakening the visceral appeal of nationalism, promoting understanding and tolerance of foreigners, and also possibly generating support for the institutions and policies of global governance.³³ In the economic sphere, the convergence thesis emphasizes that exposure to the global media should strength support for the ideas and practices of market-driven capitalism, reflecting beliefs in a minimal role for the state, deregulation, privatization, and the importance of unfettered free trade competition. In this regard, Herman and McChesney regard the Western media as the missionaries for global capitalism, reflecting the neo-liberal Washington consensus for economic development advocated by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.³⁴ Standardized brand images, mass advertizing and the marketing strategies of multinational corporations are the most obvious symbols of the homogenization of the world economy, reflecting the ubiquity of major transnational corporations, where media companies such as Disney, CNN and Google have become some of the most well-known American brands around the world. In the public sphere, the convergence thesis emphasizes that exposure to news and information from the Western media should encourage the diffusion of the principles and standards of liberal democracy, reflecting the values common in these societies, including the value of civic engagement. In terms of social and moral values, the culture reflected in popular entertainment and news journalism produced in the global North also often reflects the relatively liberal ideas characteristic of post-industrial societies, so that exposure to the global media should lead towards greater tolerance of non-traditional lifestyles and liberal sexual orientations, egalitarian

attitudes towards the roles of men and women, and a secular and individualistic perspective towards moral issues.

Chapter 6 confirmed proposition 2.1: even after introducing a battery of prior social controls for age, gender, education and income, individual news media use was consistently associated with more cosmopolitan orientations, measured by greater trust in people from other countries and faiths (Table 6.2), while simultaneously strengthening, not weakening, feelings of nationalism (Table 6.3). It is often assumed that there needs to be trade-off between identifying with one's own country and feeling part of a broader world community, as a zero-sum game, but it seems preferable to understand modern identities are complex, multiple and overlapping; people can feel simultaneously both Scottish and European, both Swedish and Scandinavian, both a resident of Cambridge, Massachusetts and a citizen of the world. The effect of media use on increasing trust in outsiders was relatively strong as well as significant; with a slightly weaker effect than education but with a similar impact as age.

Chapter 7 demonstrated that individual media use was indeed consistently linked with more capitalist economic values, as hypothesized (H#2.2), whether measured by the values of individual success (Table 7.2) and of conservative economic attitudes (Table 7.3). Moreover after the effects of age, the news media proved the second most important social characteristic predicting support for the values of individual economic success, having a stronger impact than education, income or gender.

Chapter 8 examined the impact of media use on support for more liberal sexual and moral values. Given the pervasive depiction of sexuality and love, romantic relationships and marriage throughout the Western media, in everything from prime time TV sitcoms and dramas to feature films and magazines, this could be expected to be important for shaping moral values. The evidence confirmed our expectation (H#2.3) that individual use of the news media was significantly linked (Table 8.3) to more tolerant and liberal orientations towards sexual and moral values, to disapproval of unethical standards in public life, to more secular orientations, to supporting gender equality, and to liberal family values. The strength of the coefficients for media use varied across the different value scales, and they were usually weaker than similar effects arising from education, but in all cases the multivariate results proved statistically significant.

Lastly, chapter 9 turned to the role of the news media on civic engagement. Alternative predictions could be made on the basis of the literature and we chose to test the 'virtuous circle' thesis, which suggests that the acquisition of information and knowledge about public affairs and events from the news media typically encourages greater citizen awareness and involvement in the public sphere.

The study established in Table 9.3 that use of the news media was significantly and positively related to a range of indicators of civic engagement (H#2.4), including institutional confidence, voluntary association membership, activism expressed through protest politics, and citizen interest, although media use was not significantly linked to our indicators of support for democratic values. Despite many possible reasons why attention to journalism may potentially turn off citizens, for example through negative campaign coverage or through stories focusing upon frothy celebrities rather than serious reporting about current affairs and debates about public policy, in fact the results confirmed that exposure to the news media in a wide range of societies is linked to more civic engagement, not less.

Type of media

The cross-national evidence available in the World Values Survey for examining how far effects vary by use of different types of media is limited nevertheless we did examine data separating out the impact of use of the Internet/email from reading newspapers and watching or listening to radio/TV news. In particular, as the medium without physical borders, we assumed (H3.1) that any effects from exposure to cosmopolitan communications would be greater for users of the Internet/email, compared with exposure to traditional news media. Any effects were not expected to be particularly strong, however, given the multiple information sources that we commonly use to get news and information, as well as the merger of sources across media platforms (such as listening to the radio, watching TV news or reading papers online).

The evidence in Table 10.3 confirmed that in multivariate models, even after controlling for the distinctive age, income, and educational profile of internet users, this group proved the most secular media users, as well as the most liberal towards sexual morality and tolerance of sexual diversity, while proving the least nationalistic. Internet users were also more politically engaged than average, although slightly less so than levels of activism found among newspaper and radio/TV users. In short, Internet users did present the most distinctive cultural profile, as expected, across four of the five dimensions under comparison.

Type of society

The heart of the firewall theory posits that the impact of individual use of the mass media on cultural values will be strongest in the most cosmopolitan societies with open borders to the flow of information from abroad. Chapter 5 documented the existence of these firewalls and classified countries according to the Cosmopolitanism Index, constructed based on annual indicators of levels of

globalization, economic development, and media freedom. Each of these indicators proved to be strongly inter-correlated (Tables 5.1 and 5.2). Societies were ranked (Figure 5.6) from the most isolated and parochial, such as Myanmar (Burma), Rwanda, Burundi and Iran through many mid-level countries such as Ghana, Brazil and Turkey up to the most cosmopolitan and permeable nations, which are exemplified by Sweden, Switzerland Luxembourg. The key issue is whether the effects of exposure to the news media on cultural values varied consistently in parochial and cosmopolitan societies.

The multilevel analysis confirmed that the Cosmopolitanism Index (and each of its separate components) was significantly associated with greater trust in outsiders (Table 6.2) and with less support for nationalism (Table 6.3). Most importantly, media use within cosmopolitan societies *reinforced* both these effects.

When it came to comparing capitalist economic values, however, the Cosmopolitanism Index (and each of its separate components) was related to less support for individual success values (Table 7.2) and less support for conservative economic values (Table 7.3), and again use of the news media in cosmopolitan societies further strengthened these effects. The results suggest that use of the news media usually increased support for capitalist economic values, but the direct of this effect reversed in the most globalized nations. Use of the news media often strengthens capitalist values, but according to the evidence this effect cannot be attributed, as many theorists have claimed, to the role of the international media exporting consumer capitalism to developing nations. This interpretation is fully consistent with the widespread evidence that many developing societies, which lack the basic conditions of security, stability and prosperity, adhere far more strongly to the values of material success and individual achievement than more affluent and secure societies, which give far greater emphasis to self-expression and post-materialist values.

In terms of social values, the evidence in the multilevel models showed that the Cosmopolitanism index was related to more liberal sexual and moral values, more secular orientations, and more egalitarian attitudes towards sex roles (Table 8.3). Here, however, the type of society did not predict feelings about the most appropriate ethical standards in public life or family values. The cross-level interaction effect for this dimension of values was also mixed, with the most consistent effects arising from media use in cosmopolitan societies, which reinforced liberal sexual and moral values. The cross-level effects on gender equality values proved negative, contrary to the expected direction. Overall the results of the analysis for how the type of society reinforced media use is therefore clearer and more consistent concerning cosmopolitan orientations, such as feelings of national identity, rather

than social values. The news media still had an important effect on social values. Nevertheless many other factors, such as the deep imprint of religious traditions, may prove more important in determining social attitudes and values rather than the openness of societies to information flows across national borders.

Theorists also hope that the diffusion of information about democracy and human rights can encourage civic activism and adherence to these values around the world. Table 9.3 demonstrated that by itself, use of the news media was indeed positively related to a wide range of indicators of civic engagement. The type of effect was most significantly reinforced in encouraging protest politics and democratic values in the more cosmopolitan societies. Why does individual news media use have no significant impact overall on democratic values, and yet emerge as significantly strengthening these values in cosmopolitan societies? One plausible reason is that under repressive regimes, which limit independent journalism and media pluralism, state control of the media can be used to limit public support for opposition reform movements and democratic principles. By contrast, in more open societies, the flow of Western news from abroad, as well as pluralism of outlets at home, can serve to strengthen attitudes towards democracy.

Change over time

Lastly we loosened the premises of the firewall thesis, on the grounds that cosmopolitan communications continue to expand worldwide, to consider whether there was any systematic evidence that national cultures had gradually become increasingly similar during the last quarter century – especially in more open cosmopolitan societies which were most subject to the potential forces of globalization. Trends over time in the successive waves of the World Values Survey conducted since the early 1980s allowed us to test this proposition in eleven nations. The descriptive figures and the more rigorous cross-national time-series regression analysis established two important findings. First, far from convergence, over time the values gap between parochial and cosmopolitan societies was maintained (concerning liberal social values), or even widened (in terms of feelings of nationalism and the strength of religiosity). The reason is that culture in affluent post-industrial nations is not static; instead values and attitudes continue to evolve in these nations, as demonstrated in depth elsewhere concerning religiosity and attitudes towards gender equality, so that the relative gap between types of societies does not close.³⁵ Moreover even among the post-industrial societies such as the United States and Britain, Sweden and Germany, or Japan and South Korea, which are most tightly interconnected through communication networks, trade flows, and economic interdependence, with the highest share of

cultural trade in audiovisual programs, there remain distinctive and persistent cultural differences which refuse to disappear.

The limits of our evidence

The theoretical framework and the empirical evidence which has been presented throughout this study go further, we believe, than previous attempts to analyze the effects of global communications. Certain important qualifications should be emphasized, however, in part to acknowledge the limits of what we know about media effects and to identify the next steps in this research agenda.

First, when seeking to understand diverse drivers of public opinion, we adopted a fairly parsimonious approach, focusing intentionally in this study upon the impact of the news media. As a result many other factors, not specified in the models, also contribute towards attitudes and values. A comprehensive explanation of civic engagement, for example, should incorporate a wide range of macro-level institutional contexts, such as the role of electoral systems and patterns of party competition, mezzo-level factors such as the density and activities of civil society organizations and voluntary associations, and micro-level motivational attitudes and resources. Similarly, understanding the strength of religiosity requires analysis of levels of existential security and human development in each society, as well as the multiplicity of beliefs, rituals and practices found among the world's diverse faiths. Parsimonious models have considerable advantages in terms of clarity and elegance but one potential danger from this approach concerns miss-specified models, especially if any important factors have been systematically excluded which could help to explain both use of the news media and also patterns of cultural values. The controls introduced in this study sought to account for many of the most common characteristics of news users but others could always be suggested. More detailed studies are needed to explore each of the areas of cultural values and social attitudes which we have included in the book.

This analysis also focuses primarily upon the impact of cosmopolitan mass communication arising from the news media, not examining other information sources in any depth. One obvious counterpoint is that most people spend far more time absorbing information about other peoples and places from multiple cultural goods beyond the news media, whether television and radio popular entertainment, novels and magazines, music videos and DVDs, feature films and documentaries, the performing and visual arts, design, and heritage museums, as well as from websites devoted to everything from social networking to video-games, shopping and financial transactions, and online

videos/music. Chapter 3 discussed how many diverse creative industries contribute towards our rich cultural heritage. As also acknowledged earlier, mass communications represents only one channel by which information flows across national borders; this process is also affected by the direct transfer of peoples, such as through international tourism, emigration overseas, conferences, and travel to other countries, as well as through direct interpersonal communications connecting distant peoples through international phone calls, text-messaging, video-conferencing, and emails. It is true that as a result we have only examined a relatively narrow sliver of the total process of cosmopolitan communications. Even the measures of news media use, which were available in the World Values Survey, were limited, for example not gauging the regular frequency of use or the attention devoted to news. Nevertheless the fact that the study demonstrated significant impacts arising from this process suggests that, if anything, we may have conservatively underestimated the potential cumulative effect arising from the growing interconnectedness of communication networks among societies. Comparison of a broader and more diverse range of indicators of cross-cultural communications in all its forms in future public opinion surveys can build upon this foundation and facilitate analysis of these sorts of issues.

Another major limitation is that detailed information is lacking about the typical contents of the media messages which users absorbed from websites, newspapers and TV/radio programs, for example how far people were habitually exposed to news and information mainly about their local community, about national events, or about international affairs. Multi-level research within specific countries and across member states within the European Union has linked a systematic content analysis of information sources with surveys of public opinion, most commonly within a particular election campaign. Nevertheless content analysis of the hundreds of television and radio news programs, newspapers and magazines, and the myriad diverse websites used across the wide range of societies included in the World Values Survey, was unavailable. More information about the typical contents of the news media messages in different societies would facilitate analysis of variance in media effects, a complex topic deserving further research in comparative communication studies.

Lastly, important questions arise from this study about the role of self-selection bias or interaction effects. Interpreting the direction of causality linking use of the news media with the cultural attitudes, values and practices examined in the research is not straightforward. It should be clearly acknowledged that the patterns documented in earlier chapters may arise in part from a self-selection bias; the uses and gratification perspective suggests that people seek out media messages which are consistent with their prior preferences and values; especially given the range of choices available in the

world of cable and satellite TV, as well as the proliferation of alternative websites.³⁶ Due to prior interests and the availability of many channels, publications, and online resources, it is likely that those interested in politics will probably habitually tune into news about campaigns, polls, and elections, whilst others choose to follow the financial ticker-tape on business channels, gossip shows about celebrities and fashion, daytime soaps, music videos, sports, or whatever meets existing preferences. In modern societies with multiple media options, this is a plausible logic. At the same time, however, it also seems reasonable to assume that this process is likely to be interactive and cyclical rather than all one-way, as repeated exposure to information through the mass media will probably serve, in turn, to reinforce values and attitudes. Cross-national panel survey data monitoring media habits and social attitudes among the same respondents over time, or experimental data under carefully controlled conditions, could help to resolve these issues.

The future research agenda is therefore ambitious and many advances in the study of mass communication and public opinion are needed to resolve all the complex questions about how we learn about different peoples and places, and how, in turn, this shapes our awareness, values, and behaviors, and thus the broader social culture. The news media is an important agency of cultural values, reinforcing more liberal sexual morals, more cosmopolitan tolerance of other peoples, support for free markets, and strengthening civic engagement – as demonstrated throughout the book. But this does not imply convergence. The reason is that mass communications shape the trajectory of value change in all societies, rich and poor. And most rich societies, which enjoy far more media access, are experiencing faster and further cultural change than most developing societies.

As interconnections between societies gradually become denser and faster around the globe, their cultural impact is likely to increase. Yet we should still be cautious about exaggerating the consequences of cosmopolitan communications, for good or ill, since many important firewalls persist which preserve the imprint of distinctive national cultures, especially in poorer societies remaining off the grid. We should never forget that many countries in the twenty-first century continue to lack widespread literacy and even a reliable electricity supply – let alone TVs and broadband internet. Others continue to lack access to information from the outside world due to state control by deeply repressive regimes. Cultural convergence over time is predicted as a result of more permeable borders – the cross-crossing of MTV, Google and CNN – but instead the enduring imprint of distinctive historical traditions continues to be evident today. Even among open societies, Japan is not South Korea. Britain is not Germany. Sweden is not Spain. And Canada is not the U.S. Given the cultural diversity which persists

even within the member state of the European Union, despite the most heroic and ambitious attempt to develop a common European identity and borderless community for the last fifty years since the Treaty of Brussels was first signed, it is unlikely that national identities and cultural practices are under serious danger of dissolving due to the electronic media in far more remote and less interdependent societies. We may share certain cultural icons and contemporary fashions, we may even come to share more information and ideas about people and places far across the world, but this does not mean that we all necessarily emulate each other or lose the roots from which we are born.

Table 11.1: Theoretical propositions investigated in the study and summary of the results

Primary and secondary hypotheses		Summary of results
1. TYPE OF SOCIAL SECTOR		
H1.0: Use of the news media will differ by social sector. Chapter 4		Confirmed in Table 4.3 and 4.4
	H1.1: Use of the news media will be greater among the more educated.	Confirmed in Table 4.3 and 4.4
	H1.2: Use of the news media will be greater among high-income groups.	Confirmed in Table 4.3 and 4.4
	H1.3: Use of the news media will be greater among the middle aged or older	Not confirmed: In Table 4.4 use of the news media (especially the internet) proved greater among the younger population
	H1.4: Use of the news media will be greater among men than women.	Conditional effects: In Table 4.3 the gender gap reverses by level of economic development
	H1.5: Use of the news media will be greater among those who are fluent in English.	Confirmed in Table 4.3 and 4.4
2. TYPE OF VALUES		
H1.0: The direct effect of individual news media use will encourage more modern cultural values and attitudes.		Confirmed
	H2.1: Individual exposure to the news media fosters more cosmopolitan orientations and tolerance of foreign lifestyles. Chapter 6	Confirmed in Table 6.2
	H2.2: Individual exposure to the news media encourages favorable attitudes toward global capitalism. Chapter 7	Confirmed in Table 7.2
	H2.3: Individual exposure to the news media shapes more liberal and secular attitudes towards gender equality, sexuality, and religion. Chapter 8	Confirmed in Table 8.3
	H2.4: Exposure to the news media reinforces civic engagement. Chapter 9	Confirmed in Table 9.3 with the proviso of no effect on democratic values
3. TYPE OF MEDIA		
H3.0: The impact of cosmopolitan communications will vary by the type of media. Chapter 10		Confirmed
	H3.1: The impact of cosmopolitan communications will be strongest among regular users of the internet and email.	Confirmed in Table 10.3 except for the effect on economic values
	H3.2: The impact of cosmopolitan communications will be weaker among regular newspaper readers and TV news users.	Confirmed in Table 10.3 except for the impact on political

		engagement
4. TYPE OF SOCIETY		
H4.0: The impact of mass media use on cultural values will be strongest in the most cosmopolitan societies today. <i>Chapters 6-9</i>		Confirmed but the strength and direction of the cross-level impact varies by type of values
	H4.1: The impact of exposure to the mass media on cultural values will be strongest in societies most integrated into global market and networks.	Confirmed but the strength and direction of the cross-level impact varies by type of values
	H4.2: The impact of exposure to the mass media on cultural values will be strongest in societies with internal media freedom.	Confirmed but the strength and direction of the cross-level impact varies by type of values
	H4.3: The impact of exposure to the mass media on cultural values will be strongest in societies where many people have widespread access to media technologies.	Confirmed but the strength and direction of the cross-level impact varies by type of values
5. CHANGE OVER TIME		
H5.0. Cultural convergence over time will be greatest among the most cosmopolitan societies. (Chapter 10)		
	H5.1: The most cosmopolitan societies will display the greatest similarities in cultural values today.	Not confirmed
	H5.2: The most parochial societies will display the greatest divergence in cultural values today.	Not confirmed
	H5.3: Over time, growth in cosmopolitanism will reduce divergence among national cultures.	Not confirmed

¹ Michael G. Elasmr. Ed. 2003. *The Impact of International Television: A Paradigm Shift*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

² Robert Holton. 2000. 'Globalization's Cultural Consequences.' *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*. 570:140-52.

³ For a discussion, see Tim Hayward. 1995. *Info-Rich, Info-Poor: Access and Exchange in the Global Information Society*. K.G.Saur; William Wresch. 1996. *Disconnected: Haves and Have-Nots in the Information Age*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press; Benjamin Barber. 1996. *Jihad vs McWorld: How Globalism and Tribalism Are Reshaping the World*. New York: Ballantine Books; David Held, Anthony McGrew, David Goldblatt, and Jonathan Perraton. 1999. *Global transformations: Politics, economics, and culture*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. Chapter 7.

⁴ United Nations. 2005. *2005 World Summit Outcome. Resolution 60/1 adopted by the United Nations General Assembly*. <http://daccess-ods.un.org/TMP/2663872.html>

⁵ For a discussion, see Chapter 2 in Manuel Castells. 2004. *The Power of Identity*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Blackwell.

⁶ Benjamin Barber. 1996. *Jihad vs McWorld: How Globalism and Tribalism Are Reshaping the World*. New York: Ballantine Books.

⁷ Meic Pearse. 2004. *Why the Rest Hates the West: Understanding the Roots of Global Rage*. InterVarsity Press; Frank Louis Rusciano. 2006. *Global Rage after the Cold War*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

⁸ <http://www.slowfood.com/>

⁹ Benjamin Shepard and Ronald Hayduk. (Editors). 2002. *From ACT UP to the WTO: Urban Protest and Community Building in the Era of Globalization*. London: Verso.

¹⁰ According to the 2001 Census, for example, in the London boroughs of Wembley, Hyde Park, and Southall West, almost half the population has settled from abroad. Nor is this simply a matter of the traditional Caribbean, Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi immigrant communities; almost as many Germans live in London as in Bonn, and more Americans live in London than in Syracuse, Dayton or Tallahassee. See http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/uk/05/born_abroad/html/overview.stm

¹¹ David Held and Anthony McGrew. 2007. *Globalization/Anti-Globalization: Beyond the Great Divide*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

¹² See, for example, the arguments presented by Martin Wolf. 2005. *Why Globalization Works*. 2nd edition New Haven, CT: Yale University Press; Jagdish Bhagwati. 2007. *In Defense of Globalization*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

¹³ For a recent summary of the literature, see Taylor Boas, T. Dunning and J. Bussell. 2005. 'Will the digital revolution revolutionize development? Drawing together the debate.' *Studies in Comparative International Development* 40 (2): 95-110. See also, Surendra J. Patel. Ed. 1993-5. *Technological Transformation in the Third World*. 5 vols. Aldershot: Avebury; David J. Jeremy. 1992. *The Transfer of International Technology: Europe, Japan and the USA in the Twentieth Century*. Aldershot: Edward Elgar; Nathan Rosenberg and Claudio Frischtak. Ed. 1985. *International Technology Transfer: Concepts, Methods and Comparisons*. New York: Praeger; David Charles and Jeremy Howells. 1992. *Technology Transfer in Europe*. London: Belhaven Press; Manas Chatterji. 1990. *Technology Transfer in the Developing Countries*. NY: St Martin's Press; S. R. Melkote. 1991. *Communication for Development in the Third World: Theory and Practice*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

¹⁴ Barry James. Ed. 2006. *Media development and poverty eradication*. Paris: UNESCO; Roumeen Islam. Ed. 2002. *The Right to Tell: The Role of Mass Media in Economic Development*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

¹⁵ A substantial literature has developed on the role of ICTs for e-governance, public administration and democracy. For recent overviews, see Donald F. Norris. Ed. 2007. *Current issues and trends in e-government research*. Hershey, PA: Cybertech Publishers; Viktor Mayer-Schönberger and David Lazer. Eds. 2007. *Governance and information technology: from electronic government to information government*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT.

¹⁶ Timothy Besley and Roger Burgess. 2002. 'The political economy of government responsiveness: Theory and evidence from India.' *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 117 (4): 1415-1451; Timothy Besley and Andrea Prat. 2006. 'Handcuffs for the grabbing hand? Media capture and government accountability.' *American Economic Review* 96 (3): 720-736; A. Brunetti and B. Weder. 2003. 'A free press is bad news for corruption.' *Journal of Public Economics* 87 (7-8): 1801-1824; D. Fell. 2005. 'Political and media liberalization and political corruption in Taiwan.' *China Quarterly* (184): 875-893.

¹⁷ Douglas A. Van Belle, Cooper Drury and Richard Stuart Olson. 2005. 'The CNN Effect, Geo-strategic motives and the Politics of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance.' *Journal of Politics*; Douglas, A. Van Belle, Jean-Sébastien Rioux, and David M. Potter. 2004. *Media, Bureaucracies, and Foreign Aid: A Comparative Analysis of the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, France and Japan*. New York: Palgrave/St. Martin; Douglas A. Van Belle. 2000. *Press Freedom and Global Politics*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers; K.A. Swain. 2003. 'Proximity and power factors in Western coverage of the sub-Saharan AIDS crisis.' *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 80 (1): 145-165.

¹⁸ Daya Kishan Thussu. 2006. *International Communication: Continuity and Change*. New York: Hodder Arnold Publication;

¹⁹ Herbert J. Schiller. 1973. *Communication and Cultural Domination*. White Plains, NY: International Arts and Sciences Press.

²⁰ Herbert J. Schiller. 1973. *Communication and Cultural Domination*. White Plains, NY: International Arts and Sciences Press; Johan Galtung. 1979. 'A structural theory of imperialism.' In *Transnational Corporations and World Order*. Ed. G. Modelski. San Francisco: W.H. Freeman; Johan Galtung. 1980. *The True Worlds*. New York: The Free Press; M. Masmoudi. 1981. 'The new world information order.' In *Crisis in International News: Policies and Prospects*. Ed J. Richstad and M.A. Anderson. New York: Columbia University Press.

²¹ Sean MacBride. 1980. *Communication and Society Today and Tomorrow, Many Voices One World: Towards a new more just and more efficient world information and communication order*. Paris: UNESCO. International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems; Hamid Mowlana. 1985. *International Flow of Information: A Global Report and Analysis* Paris: UNESCO.

²² Alexander Stephan. 2007. *The Americanization of Europe: Culture, Diplomacy, and Anti-Americanism After 1945*. Berghahn Books.

²³ David L. Looseley. 1997. *The Politics of Fun: Cultural Policy and Debate in Contemporary France*. Oxford: Berg; C.W. Thomsen. 1989. *Cultural transfer or electronic imperialism*. Heidelberg: Carl Winter.

²⁴ UNESCO. 2001. *Universal Declaration of Cultural Diversity*. Paris: UNESCO.
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001271/127160m.pdf>

²⁵ UNESCO. 2001. *Universal Declaration of Cultural Diversity*. Paris: UNESCO. Article 10.
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001271/127160m.pdf>

²⁶ See UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

http://www.uis.unesco.org/ev.php?URL_ID=5830&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201

²⁷ Jennings Bryant and Dolf Zillmann (Eds). 2002. *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

²⁸ Benedict Anderson. 1996. *Imagined Communities: reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.

²⁹ Joan E. Grusec and Paul D. Hastings (Eds). 2007. *Handbook of Socialization: Theory and Research*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

³⁰ Tamar Liebes and Elihu Katz. 1993. *The export of meaning: Cross-cultural readings of Dallas*. Oxford: Polity Press.

³¹ Pippa Norris. 2001. *Digital Divide: Civic engagement, information poverty and the Internet worldwide*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

³² Pippa Norris. 2000. *A Virtuous Circle: Political Communications in Post-Industrial Democracies*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

³³ Michael Mann. 1997. 'Has globalization ended the rise and rise of the nation-state?' *Review of International Political Economy* 4 (3): 472-496; Manuel Castells. 2004. *The Power of Identity*. 2nd Edition. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

³⁴ Edward S. Herman and Robert W. McChesney. 1998. *The Global Media: The Missionaries of Global Capitalism*. Cassell.

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