



## Global, Hybrid or Multiple? The New Cultural Geography of Identities<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

This paper explores the multiplicity of levels of media use and identity as a key element of the changing cultural geography of globalization. The movement from traditional local life to modern interaction with mass media has produced identities that are already multilayered with cultural geographic elements that are local, regional, transnational based on cultural-linguistic regions, and national (Anderson, 1983). Both traditional and new media users around the world continue to strongly reflect these layers or aspects of identity while many also acquire new layers of identity that are transnational, or global. In this paper, we examine the relationship between processes of hybridization of identity and culture over time and the buildup, maintenance, and defense of multilayered identities. These layers of identity are articulated with a variety of media, such as television and the Internet, but not in a simple sense of being primarily influenced by media. Some layers of identity, such as those of religious traditionalism, may actively resist some of the ideas many media channels and messages carry.

**Key words:** media use; identity; cultural geography of globalization

These increasingly multilayered identities are articulated with a variety of changing structures {Hall, 1997 #1633}. As we shall see below, economies, political powers, social class and geography strongly structure who can access what new channels. Further, the media institutions themselves are becoming more complexly multilayered as they reach further geographically. Institutional models, such as commercial TV networks, globalize, but are also localized and regionalized as they engage the specific histories and institutions of a variety of cultures, media traditions and regulatory systems. These kinds of adaptations and localizations point us toward another notable theoretical strand, hybridity.

In our model, hybridity and multi-layeredness coexist and interact. Layers like the institutions, program genres, and audience identities for public service, like the BBC, or government-sponsored media, like Telesur, co-exist with layers for commercial networks, genres and audiences. Both can acquire and maintain substantial solidity, but both are also changing, in part as they interact with and change each other. For example, the BBC became commercialized in global operation, even though its U.K. base is still a

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public service. The global expansion of Discovery and similar networks, takes documentary and other genres from public service television and hybridizes them, or as many would say, waters them down, into a new global commercial form.

### **Cultural sedimentation: layers and mixtures/hybrids**

In my own work, particularly a number of in-depth interviews within Brazil, and in Texas, from Austin to the Texas border with Mexico, I find a process of hybridity as well as a process of the formation, maintenance, occasional collapse, and recent proliferation of multiple layers of identity and corresponding layers of media use. I articulate this as a dual process. As an observer in Brazil, for instance, I perceive cultural hybridity taking place in a certain situation. However, I rarely interview people who see themselves as culturally hybrid. On the other hand, I frequently find myself interviewing people who articulate their identity as connected to a series of geographic spaces or cultural layers. In both Brazil and Texas, I find people who articulate very clearly a local sense of self, a regional sense of self, a national sense of self, some interest or knowledge of the global, a social class sense of self, a religious sense of self, an ethnic and/or linguistic sense of self, a professional, and an educational sense of self.

So in my work, I'm moving toward what we might see as a kind of sedimentary model in which layers of meaning, culture, identity, and media use form and persist. New layers form over the top of all others as structural circumstances permit or even dictate. Sometimes when we look at people, for instance, we are likely to see the newest layer as strongest. For many observers when they look at culture these days, they see on top a new layer of what they might call globalization. So seeing this as a new layer, there is a supposition that this is perhaps now the dominant layer, perhaps homogenizing all the others. Or perhaps even the dominant aspect of someone's identity or experience. However, if we were looking at a highway cut or a river canyon someplace, we see the layers from the side. We realize that there are recent layers, which are important, but they've built up over older layers.

One problem with the geological analogy for this is that it seems to imply that the layers persist as separate. But as in geology, the layers often interact. They sometimes break down and form new layers out of the pre-existing ones. An earlier article by Duane Varan {1998 #2385, p. 58} used a geological metaphor to argue the reverse, that global or transcultural contact, tends to erode local cultures:



Through paradigmatic application of geological constructs, I demonstrate the utility of applying the erosion metaphor to questions related to the transcultural impact of television. I explore four specific processes associated with such erosion: cultural abrasion, resulting from friction between the contrasting values reflected in a cultural terrain and a foreign media agent; cultural deflation, whereby least consolidated facets within a culture are most vulnerable to foreign influence; cultural deposition, in which foreign beliefs, practices, and artifacts supplement a cultural landscape potentially providing for cross-cultural fertilization; and cultural saltation, where social practices may appropriate communication systems in response to the perceived threat of a foreign media agent. The metaphor provides a framework to reinterpret earlier findings and to contextualize experiences of cultures under threat.

Even more in culture, I think we will see that these layers interact with each other so that as one becomes globalized a certain part of one's life, such as one's education or profession, one finds that inevitably in dialogue with one's local interests, musical preferences, or even religious or philosophical interests. One could have a rich metaphor to work with for the ongoing nature of change. Too many systems either overstate change, as in the very strong cultural imperialism hypothesis, or in contrast, understate change, as in some globalization hypotheses in which everything forms separate pockets and simply persists. I don't think any of those are quite adequate for understanding the complexity of what we see as people do use new forms of media to interact, forming new layers and levels of identity. But they continue also to think in terms of older layers of identity, interest and media use, as well.

#### **Articulation of new spaces and layers of identity**

Hall observes that "the great collective social identities, which we thought of as large-scale, all-encompassing, homogenous, as unified collective identities..." {Hall, 1997 #1633, p. 44}, such as class, race, nation, gender and "the West," are still present and efficacious, but are no longer complete master concepts. He sees such collective identities now as more processes of identification, never completed, related to evolving perceptions of difference between groups. He cited the example of how many young people wanted to be Caribbean, Black and British, not just one or the other (1997). Hall's recognition of the increasing multiplicity of identities and identifications is one of the bases of our argument about multiple levels and spaces of identity.

Hall also argued that identities did not grow or flow freely, that they were articulated to texts, to institutions and to societal structures of economic, social and political power. While identities change, multiply and have relative autonomy, they are also tied to sources of power, to economic structures and class positions, to producers of



media {Hall, 1980 #34}, but not in simple or reductionist ways. I would like to build on this idea to see how different levels of identity are articulated to changes in media access structured by class, to cultural capital that guides and limits choices and understandings among media offerings, and to other forces that can be seen as articulated themselves through complex cultural geographies.

### **The importance of cultural geography**

Building on Michel de Certeau, I argue that a cultural geography, like a city, is constructed both from above and below. De Certeau notes that strategic decisions are made top-down by political leaders, planners, industrialists, creating spaces from rural areas filled with sugar plantations originally worked by slaves (a political-economic decision that still defines much of the Northeast coast of Brazil) to cities organized for commerce, finance or industry. However, those who live in and use these spaces make tactical decisions on the ground that can, to some degree, redefine them by what the place's users do with the space, what practices they evolve {de Certeau, 1984 #2968}. For example, I lived in 1977-78 in Brasília. The city had been designed in a severely abstract way with ministries here, housing there, and major commerce elsewhere, but in those two years, I could see that people on the ground were constantly adding bars, coffee shops, music clubs and other cultural amenities to neighborhoods that re-asserted traditional Brazilian urban cultural practices and made it feel more like other Brazilian cities, re-articulating the cultural life of the city. In doing so, they, along with the city planners, created a sense of what the local identity of Brasília is to those who live there.

The same is true of other kinds of order imposed from above. Spanish and Portuguese colonizers imposed Catholicism on indigenous and African peoples in Latin America, but the result was a variety of hybrid practices, not a consistent European religion, De Certeau notes:

Submissive, and even consenting to their subjection, the Indians nevertheless often *made of* [emphasis in the original] the rituals, representations, and laws imposed on them something quite different from what their conquerors had in mind; they subverted them not by rejecting or altering them, but by using them with respect to ends and references foreign to the system they had no choice but to accept. {de Certeau, 1984 #2968, p. xiii}

This specific phenomenon, religious practice in the Americas, has been a major focus on theorization. Many see the religious syncretism that developed over time in such as practices as one of the first major forms of hybridity {Canclini, 1995 #1212}. For years, many scholars saw the Afro-Brazilian religion *candomblé* as a primary



example of syncretism, mixing the *orixás* or spirits of Africa's Yoruba religion and Catholic saints, producing a new hybrid religion (Bastide, 1978). However, one of the principal *candomblé* communities in Salvador, Brazil, Ilê Axé Opô *Afonjá*, issued a statement that said, *Iansã* (a *candomblé* deity) is not Santa Barbara" (the Catholic saint with whom *Iansã* had often been syncretized) {*Afonjá*, 1999 #2274}. The group argued that syncretism was, in effect, a protective covering or layer designed to conceal the ongoing worship of their African religion and avoid persecution, but that today, the pretense of syncretism could be dropped in favor of a deliberate effort to return to the Yoruba roots of *candomblé*. Layers, or overlays of adopted culture can coexist with an inner layer of traditional culture, with the adopted exterior masking the traditional core.

### **Multiple identifications and multiple media spaces of production, flow, identification**

In this emerging model, people increasingly identify with multiple cultures at various layers or spaces. People identify with multiple cultural groups or symbols in different fields of activity. People establish different identities at school and work, in sports or religion, with family and friends. In the process of learning from others, people form multiple layers of cultural capital, often specific not only to a field of activity, as Bourdieu (1984) predicted, but to different cultural layers. People form different dispositions to behave differently with various groups. Someone can be religious and traditional at home with their parents, adventurous and critical with some friends, sports-minded with others, and achievement-oriented with colleagues at work. All of these different layers of identity and culture will have varied connections to global, cultural linguistic, national, and local spaces and forces.

These are based in varying combinations of cultural geography, institutional strategies and alliances, and cultural productions based on genre linked to institutions, nations and other cultural spaces. Complex cultural geography is based in cultural definitions of markets and spaces for production, flow and consumption. Institutional power is defined by geography, but also redefines cultural geography, offering new cultural products to identify with.

Some of this map comes from examining the production process, some from extensive mapping I have recently done of television flows (Straubhaar, 2007), and much comes from interviews with a variety of audience members in Salvador and Sao Paulo, Brazil and Central-south Texas conducted by me and my students at the University of Texas. Interviewing in São Paulo mostly took place 1989-98, in Salvador,



1990-98, 2003-06, and in Texas, 1989-present. Both semi-structured interviews about media and less structured life and family histories with media were gathered. Rantanen {,2005 #2969} provides very engaging example of how carefully examined family histories of media use may inform analyses of globalization. Following is a map, or typology of layers from the most global down to the local.

**Most global:**

- Global infrastructures of technology, finance and media models that structure more specific layers of production, flow and identification below.
- A U.S. “empire” based on Hollywood structural & cultural power, itself becoming a transnational network of co-production (Miller, et al).
- Global genre producers and co-producers, like Discovery or BBC, focused on highly globalized genres like travel, nature, animal and other documentaries.
- Global format producers and exporters/co-producers, such as Endemol, primarily based in Holland, the United Kingdom, USA and Australia, but expanding.
- Other nation-based global exporters – Latin American producers of telenovelas, Japanese anime, Bollywood, etc.

**Transnational, not global in scope:**

- Transnational cultural-linguistic producers, markets and audiences – geographically separated former colonies and diasporic migrants, English, French, Portuguese-speaking.
- Geo-cultural regional producers, markets and audiences – geographically linked cultures with common or similar languages, shared histories, and geographic proximity, like the Arab World, Greater China, and Latin America.
- Translocal producers, markets and audiences – crossing borders into India from Hong Kong, into the USA from Mexico, etc. (Kumar, et al).

**National or smaller:**

- National producers, markets and audiences – of enormous variety, from powerful states like China, which push Rupert Murdoch around, to failed states like Somalia.
- Regional producers, markets and audiences – smaller than states, perhaps lapping across borders, like the cultural region and border zone between Monterrey, Mexico to Austin, Texas.
- Metropolitan producers, markets and audiences – global cities or media capitals (Curtin), which are directly linked to global networks, and produce for themselves, regions, nations or transnational spaces.
- Local producers, markets and audiences – at the level of the smaller city, municipality or even neighborhood.

Examining this list of layered producers, markets and audiences more carefully, there are historical and cultural geographic patterns of development that put global



developments into a more nuanced perspective. Markets and services are not just newly defined from above by technology or corporate ambition, but also by culture-patterned uses and identities and how they layer over time, including many pre-global or even pre-modern layers of culture, which are often the most powerful layers of identity.

The dominant cultural forces for most people seem to have been originally local and regional. People thought of themselves primarily in terms of villages, local dialects, perhaps tribes or clans. Only after 1700 did most Frenchmen speak French, in one of the earliest nations to be defined as such (Weber 1976). That sense of locality lingers.

Many cultural theory works use the term "local" in a loose way as opposed to global. It would help to define local more precisely. Based on my interviews in Brazil, even the most globe-hopping businessman or academic usually still has a very **local identity** as well based in the specific cultural geography of a neighborhood they live in, other neighborhoods they go to for work or pleasure. That locality may be defined by planners on maps but is often more vividly defined by restaurants, music clubs and scenes, nightclubs, museums, bookstores, and coffee shops; all the many places that in a very physical and spatial sense tend to give life local context and local pleasure. These are linked to personal networks, but in media terms, also local music scenes, local radio, local newspapers, festivals, and performances.

For many people, there are **regional layers of identity** and regional layers of media, which are smaller than the nation, but larger than the very local. Many of these regional foci depend on language variation. Very important cultural and linguistic regions from Catalans in Spain to the Kurds in Turkey to Mayan language speakers in southern Mexico to a variety of regional language groups in India still have strong layers of quite separate identities from the nation states that contain them. They also often have ethnic, cultural, and religious differences with national majority populations. They usually have their own music traditions and scenes (O'Connor 2002), and histories, which are often intense focuses of identification. Sometimes hundreds of millions in very large nations like India speak local or regional languages linked to regional cultures, film industries, broadcasters, etc.

In other large nations, like Brazil, even when regions are not divided by language or religion, there can still be noticeable regional cultures. Although all speak Portuguese and the large majority is Catholic, there are noted regional identities, which support regional cultural industries, particularly in music, in the South {Leal, 1989 #1267}, North {McGowan, 1998 #2970} and Northeast {Vianna, 1999 #2304}. So





regionalism varies with its bases of language, religion, ethnicity and musical tradition in different countries, but is very widespread and many people, including those I interviewed in Salvador, Brazil, reveal regionalism as a distinct layer of identity in their media and cultural choices, when interviewed.

Another strong set of pre-national and pre-global cultural forces are **geo-cultural**, based on cultural-linguistic groups that precede the European colonization beginning in the late 1400s. They tend to have strong geographic regional proximity, hence the geo-, that turned in lasting close cultural ties. These are based on older ethnic groups, languages, empires, and religions, in places like Greater China, the Arab World, and South Asia. Some cultural forces and identities that remain very powerful date from before most nation-states, from colonial empires, migration, languages, religions, and racial mixtures, in Latin America, Franco- and Luso-phone Africa, in the USA, and other Anglophone nations, such as Australia or Canada (Abram 2004). Post-colonial areas like Latin America now share centuries of historical, cultural linguistic, ethnic, dynastic or political, and religious roots, of geo-linguistic (Sinclair 1999) or geo-cultural layers of understanding and identification (Straubhaar 2005).

They were reinforced by the media of the time. Books have flowed among language and religious groups for millennia. The Bible and Koran helped expand large areas of shared religious identification and at least in the case of the Koran, considerable Arabic language hegemony as well in the Mid-East and North Africa. Music, drama, poetry and other "media," broadly defined helped reinforce such ties, even before printed books.

There can also be meaningful associations widely spread geographically but linked by language, culture and history, colonial experience, and now academic interaction that build on common literatures, administrative traditions, literary, dramatic and poetic forms, etc. There are more far-flung geographically far-flung groupings such as the Portuguese-speaking world (Portugal, Angola, Mozambique, and Brazil, along with much smaller places like East Timor) or the English-speaking world. I distinguish them from the geo-cultural by calling them **cultural linguistic transnational layers of identity or spaces**.

While the roots of these geo-cultural and transitional cultural linguistic layers of culture predated both the nation-state and globalization, they were reinforced by many of the new forces, particularly in technology and economics that we associate with globalization. Just as we see growth in Hollywood coverage of the world {Miller, 2005





#2776}, we see rapid growth in cultural linguistic and geo-cultural spaces and markets in television exports (Straubhaar, 2007), satellite/cable TV {Sinclair, 1996 #1980}, Internet sites, music and movie downloads.

However, national power over media still remains strong in most of the world, at least where strong, coherent governments persist {Morris, 2001 #2211}. Many people in the last two centuries have interacted with modern national educational systems in which textbooks and teaching norms are discussed and prescribed at a national level. They have also grown up with national media. They often deal with other nationalizing forces, national churches in some cases, national labor unions, national sport teams, institution-led patriotism, and all the things that in many ways are articulated with a certain sense of nationalism.

National cultural forces are linked to novels and national newspapers since the 19th Century (Anderson, 1983), and since the 20th Century, national radio, television, film and music. Anderson shows those national cultures and national media are not a given and they are slowly and often carefully constructed over time. Sometimes governments have deliberately used cultural elements, such as the 1930s to present use of samba and other music in Brazil, to articulate national identity {Vianna, 1999 #2304}.

### **New global layers of cultural identification**

People around the world also acquire new layers of identity or identification corresponding to new global layers of production and flow of media, enabled by new structural forms of political economy, and new forms and models of media. Forming one of the main new global layers, Hollywood dominated the flow of film to most world markets (Miller 2001) and at least initially dominated the flow of television, as well (Nordenstreng and Varis 1974). So by sheer dint of exposure, American culture began to seem as a familiar second culture to many people (Gitlin 2001), particularly in Western Europe and the Anglophone countries where the U.S. presence was often most notable, but around much of the rest of the world as well (Straubhaar 2007). U.S. exports have also been prominent over the years in satellite/cable TV channels, music, and the Internet. A recent turn in political economy research calls this a new sort of virtual empire by the USA (Hardt and NEGRI 2001). However, many people around the world were more lightly touched by this U.S. layer than others, depending on location, social class, language, religion, and other aspects of identity that led them to discount



the U.S. output and choose to watch, read and listen to other things (Hoskins and Mirus 1988).

There are also renewed and expanded transnational layers, based on the roots noted above of cultural-linguistic and geo-cultural levels of production, flow and identity. These utilize the same technologies as does the U.S. media and cultural industries, contributing to the counter to U.S. hegemony potential in what Hardt and Negri call the "multitude" {, 2004 #2492} of those who use the same mechanisms to either oppose the USA or simply develop their own power within their own spheres, like Islamist forces within the Islamic world. Mass media like radio, cinema and television helped consolidate and renew language and cultural groupings. Since the mid-1990s, research by Sinclair and others (1996) have highlighted the growing importance of cultural linguistic markets. In several cases, new export powers grew up within cultural-linguistic regions originally dominated by others, like the USA within the Anglophone world {Abram, 2004 #2192} or Brazil within the Lusophone world {Marques de Melo, 1988 #596; Cabecinhas, 2006 #2720}. Research on the role of satellite TV in the Arab World (Kraidy 2002) shows how new refinements in media technology can continue to facilitate and reinforce such identities.

In television, the U.S. continues to export heavily, but there are also new layers of other global production and flow or access, such as the worldwide but limited exports of Latin American telenovelas, Japanese anime on film and television, Hong Kong kung fu film and television, and Bollywood films, among others. Brazil alone is estimated to have exported telenovelas to over 140 countries. The scope of these flows, especially compared to Hollywood exports, has been contested (Biltreyst and Meers 2000) but they have grown into visible new options for those who have access to them. Some, such as Japanese anime, have grown beyond the contested limits of what were originally called counter-flows {Thussu, 2007 #2900}.

There is also some new global flow of news (with new operations like Al-Jazeera in English), feature films (especially those of Bollywood or those co-produced with Hollywood), music, and some Internet sites, like YouTube, where non-U.S. material is growing rapidly {Cohen, 2006 #2971}. There are new media forms that seemed to be global in ways that we've perhaps not yet thought how to articulate, such as the way young people in many countries now interact in English via technologies like massive multiple online role playing games like World of Warcraft or virtual worlds like Second Life. These are now becoming so globalized that there are calls in 2009 for



research proposals from several U.S. government agencies that are trying to understand them as a new global form of communication.

### **Global digital archipelago of new media access and use**

However, a common error of quite a bit of techno-enthusiast globalization literature is to assume that these new layers or spaces of media use and interaction are widely available globally. In reality, the world of global media, particularly the new media, is very stratified by class, education, literacy, income and place. Most of the world's people do not have access to the new tools and channels that carry some of the layers described above. Many places exist, particularly in Africa and South Asia, where access to even simple broadcast TV and radio is still quite limited.

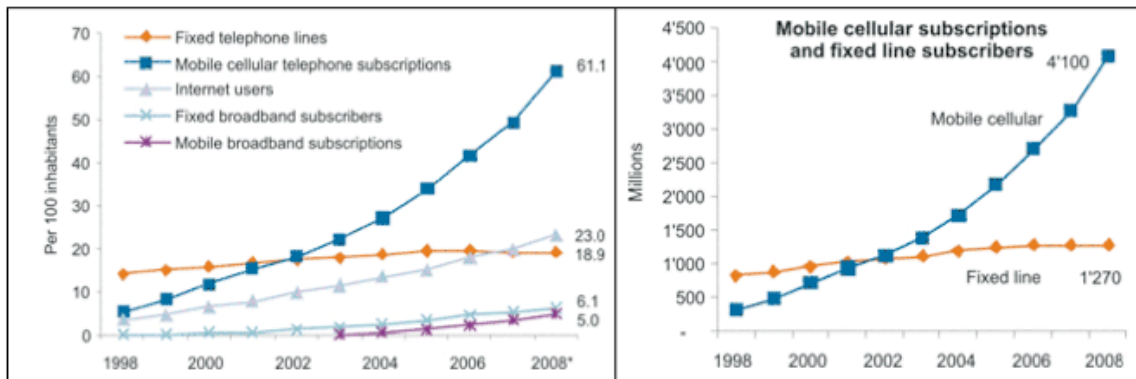
There is what Mattelart (2002) has described as a global archipelago or a 'techno-apartheid' global economy (p. 607) of those included in the information rich global economy, concentrated in the rich countries of the European Union, North America, Australia/New Zealand, and parts of East Asia, but in which almost 80 percent of the world's population is excluded (Mattelart, 2002, p. 608). That global archipelago of high incomes and connectivity tends to have very high Internet, satellite, cable TV, advanced mobile phone, and other new media access and use. This archipelago is a unique place where people find it easy to pursue global information, entertainment and interaction, whether it is on new forms of television, the Internet, games, audio through the Internet, mobile devices, or other channels. Its infrastructure is now in many ways beginning to converge together on the Internet and, in less dense forms, on some kinds of mobile phones. Most people in the digital archipelago have both physical access to an Internet connection and the education, cultural capital and social capital that enables them to use it skillfully for their own interests. Majorities of users in at least the major urban parts of this archipelago have access to broadband Internet.

Broadband penetration is a good indicator of the broad outlines of the archipelago of the highly connected. An International Telecommunication Report gives the broad outlines (ITU 2007, p. 9):

Today, however, the wealthy countries dominate broadband penetration. Some 70 per cent, or nearly three-quarters, of broadband subscribers worldwide in 2006, were located in high-income countries that accounted for just 16 per cent of world population. Furthermore, two economies – India and Vietnam – accounted for more than 95 per cent of all broadband subscribers in low-income countries, while a single economy – China – accounted for 94 per cent of broadband subscribers in the lower-middle income group (Figure 1.2). The good news is that a number of developing countries are experiencing broadband growth. In Peru, for example, the number of broadband subscribers has grown

by close to 80 per cent annually between 2001 and 2006, from 22'779 in 2001 to 484'899 at the end of 2006. In Europe, over half the Estonian population uses the Internet and the country has the highest penetration of both Internet and broadband in Central and Eastern Europe. But in Least Developed Countries (LDCs), there were merely 46'000 broadband subscribers in the 22 out of 50 LDCs with broadband service in 2006. (ITU, 2007, p. 9)

### Global ICT Developments



Note: \* Estimates.

Source: ITU World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators database.

An ITU report for 2008 notes that broadband grows slowly but that some limited potential access to global media via standard mobile phones is growing much more quickly {ITU, 2009 #2973}. However, user studies from developing countries tend to show little international use of standard mobile phones except telephone calls, primarily by immigrants and their families {Corbett, 2008 #2972}.

Even inside the global high tech archipelago, people with less education tend to have lower access and less profitable usage of their connectivity (Mattelart, 2002). People who are rural, less educated, or who simply do not possess the cultural capital or group habitus (Bourdieu, 1984), do not necessarily have the interest, wherewithal or ability to follow the same patterns as the urban or more educated within the archipelago. The Pew Internet studies in the USA have noted that a number of people there do not know enough to use the Internet enjoyably and others perceive it as outside their interests and personal repertoires of entertainment and information.

Outside the global archipelago, there is another new model to the world's connectivity. Many of the larger developing countries, such as Brazil, Russia India and China, and other large-scale developing countries have large numbers of Internet and satellite TV users. However, they are internally even more stratified than the high-income OECD countries. While 3.5% of Brazil has broadband connectivity, a total of 34% uses the Internet, often struggling to get access in public places or with low



bandwidth home connections {Stats, 2009 #2974}. Most use it with only partial understanding of the tools, frequently frustrated by connectivity. So, while many developing country elite users join the global archipelago described earlier, many more in their populations are excluded. Many don't even know they are excluded.

There is yet another world in most of Africa, and much of Asia, the Arab World and Latin America, where almost all people are excluded but there is a very small globalized elite of new media users in certain companies, parts of some urban areas, and a few NGOs and educational institutions. This world excludes 90% or more of all potential users of the Internet (ITU, 2009).

There is another pattern that splits Internet use from in satellite and cable TV, especially in India and much of the Middle East. While the Internet remains restricted, satellite and/or cable TV have become truly mass media in some countries, like India (Sinclair 2005). Structural changes have been made within satellite and cable TV to reduce prices so that cable in a major Indian city may cost under five dollars a month. In most of these situations, however, a parallel structural change has been made to focus on regional, translocal, geocultural or transnational channels that target the population in question with its own culture (Kumar 2006). Major efforts have been made to localize or regionalize satellite and cable TV, challenging another aspect of its assumed globalization.

### **The really existing uses of satellite technology**

The existing uses of satellite TV technology are very plural: global, transnational, translocal, and national. There are a number of global channels, as we shall see below, but most of them are adapted, at least minimally, to targeted regions and nations.

There are some truly global satellite and cable TV channels, such as CNN, MTV, HBO, ESPN, Discover, Disney, BBC, Nickelodeon and Cartoon Channel. However, we need to understand exactly how these are structured and exactly how they operate. Some, like HBO, remain highly centralized with regional offices making a selection among American material to figure out what would be most regionally appropriate and would not affect local sensibilities. So that a Singapore office of HBO seems to exercise some degree of choice and moral censorship over what's available on the HBO broadcast into Singapore, Malaysia and its region, but it is still a very globalized channel. On the other hand, some global icons like MTV have gained extensive popularity and commercial success precisely by localizing its genre forms of



video clip, VJ, and youth-oriented reality shows into national and regional versions. The tendency seems to be in the latter direction.

Nearly all-global channels have done the minimal localization of translation and dubbing. Those that do not so extensively, like CNN, remain locked in small, if elite, parts of the English language archipelago, with very small audiences by TV standards, as Colin Sparks (1998) and others have noted. Some popular specialty channels do a little more than dubbing, such as Discovery and Cartoon Channel. They do local culture based transitions, promotions, and appeals to draw local audiences towards what remains largely globalized programming (Chalaby 2005). These channels are most popular among specific niches, such as educationally aspiring middle classes or children, as we shall see below. Many channels, particularly in music, sports, news, television drama, etc. find they have to localize more in order to compete effectively with more culturally specific transnational and national channels. There is a tendency for such channels to first regionalize and then focus increasingly on national situations that require more specificity in order to achieve a decent audience to become profitable (Curtin, forthcoming).

The example of Murdoch in Asia is interesting. He initially tried to cover all of Asia with five television channels: MTV Asia, a BBC channel, Prime Sports out of Denver, Star Plus entertainment and culture, and a single Mandarin language channel. He rapidly discovered that he had to go to much more national and now has over 50 channels aimed at various specific places, specific culture regions and nations with various specific lineups. He is continuing to subdivide and localize further everyday.

Some of the fiercest competition for Murdoch and other would-be global titans comes from new transnational channels that work within cultural spaces or markets, defined by language and culture. Many of these are geo-cultural. They work within culture and language defined spaces of contiguous nations that share not only languages but pre-colonial cultural and historical commonalities, in areas such as Greater China or the Arab World, or colonial common languages and histories, such as Latin America. Some are transnational cultural-linguistic spaces, such as the English- or Portuguese-speaking cultural spaces or markets, spread across the globe but unified by colonial languages, shared histories, and often by new post-colonial cultural exporters, like the USA in the Anglophone world, or Brazil in the Lusophone world. Networks targeting these more specific cultural spaces seem have an advantage, which we cover more below, over more global, but also more culturally distant broadcasters. Al-Jazeera beats





CNN so completely in the Arab World in part by the cultural specificity or proximity of its news approach, framed within a more specific set of commonly held values and traditions.

Other strong competitors to global corporations are either national or translocal. In India, there are a number of translocal (targeting the local or national from outside it) commercial India-oriented satellite channels that come in from outside India. There are increasing numbers of local and regional channels, based out of the pre-existing local and regional film industries. These show both the existing stocks of films from regional language film industries and also create new television programs in regional Indian languages (Kumar 2006). So while the technology of satellite TV has spread out in the 1990s into a number of places, in many cases it has been used for rather traditional purposes to break open an existing broadcast television monopoly, as in India, Turkey or Iran (Semati 2006) or other places where government control over national television remains quite strong. In these instances, a new phenomenon of trans-local TV is arisen, which permits those who wish to reach those cultures markets and polities to do so via satellite TV from outside (Kumar, 2006). On the other hand, satellite TV content is not what one would have anticipated as global from the U.N. debates in the 1960s or 1970s on satellites (Katz 1977). It seems pretty much organized within cultures and languages already known to people. It is frequently marketing goods, ideas, or even religions or political parties that they're already quite familiar. In some ways these are alternative national or regional channels using satellite or cable technology to come in from outside, much more translocal than global.

Many of these same channels also target diasporic populations in a truly global way. Both translocal “national” and regional language channels from India follow migrants to North America, Europe, the Middle East and elsewhere. Some national channels, like Chinese Central TV in English, or transnational versions of geo-cultural channels, like Al-Jazeera in English, now intend to grow from a specific national or regional base to more global roles and to an audience beyond the ones constituted by migrants from their regions.

However, an even earlier and perhaps even more widespread use of satellite TV in many places, starting with India, the Soviet Union and the United States, was simply to use the satellite to bring new channels internally to the entire national polity or market. Most of the people in small town or rural Brazil who watch television do so via a signal carried from a satellite transmitter and rebroadcast in their small town or rural





area. These retransmitters may have been put up by a national network, by local advertisers, or most likely, by a mayor who saw bringing national television to town as a strong benefit to his electorate (and a good way to get re-elected). In many ways, satellite dishes coupled with re-transmitters were indeed public works programs in many parts of the world from the 1980s and 1990s into the 2000s (Straubhaar, 2007). So much satellite use harks back conceptually and technologically to an earlier day of communications development programs when satellite TV was widely promoted in many large developing countries or even large industrializing countries like the United States and the Soviet Union as ideal ways to reach the entire populace with a signal (McAnany 1987).

### **Globalization and class among audiences/users**

Another layer to add to the discussion of multi-layered television and new media is to think about its audience, not so much in the linguistic or cultural geographic terms that we've been speaking about above, but to think about global cultural layers or segments in class terms. At one level, we have the super connected elite of the global media archipelago described above. At the other extreme, in rural parts of Africa and South Asia, there are many people who can barely afford radio or are scarcely covered by very many channels in it (Souto 2005). In terms of global elites, the very best educated and connected, the most likely to speak English and have a strong cultural capital knowledge of global politics and events, are probably major consumers of many globalized channels and spaces, both on satellite/cable TV and the Internet.

Probably the smallest and most elite audiences are for the global news channels, CNN, the BBC, and new would-be global news channel from CCTV (China) or Al-Jazeera. CNN and BBC target political and intellectual elites. That they reach very important groups is true, often important elites in terms of their economic and political importance, but not particularly massive audiences. From my own interviewing in Brazil, the Dominican Republic, and various social groups and language groups in Texas, I have observed that the cultural capital as well as the English ability required to actually knowledgeably and enjoyably watch BBC or CNN news on satellite TV or cable is considerable, and rare. For example, in Santo Domingo, in 1987, several people initially told me that CNN was one of the reasons they got cable TV, but on closer examination, almost none of them watched it with any regularity. So even though the idea may interest people, very few people actually have the ability to sustain watching them over time.



Certain other channels with global ambitions have also aimed at liberally educated and wealthier audiences within various nations who have the English-language ability (for those channels that do not yet dub their programming) and the cultural capital and knowledge of the look to find their programming interesting. I interviewed an entrepreneur in Brazil in the late 1980s, who intended to start an American talk show channel in Latin America with shows like Oprah or Phil Donahue. I asked her if she thought she had a big enough target audience to actually make money with across Latin America, people who would know enough to be interested in Opera and Phil Donahue? She was sure she had lots of friends across Latin America who spent quite a bit of time in the USA, who knew English very well, traveled to the U.S. several times a year, etc. What she didn't realize was that even for a regional television channel aimed at a market seemingly as broad as Latin America, she was targeting a very narrow, class-defined group of people. There simply probably weren't enough such people to justify such a satellite channel and, in fact, her channel went bankrupt within a couple of years.

Other channels do successfully target global middle and upper middle classes. It seems that HBO and a certain number of other channels reach middle classes and a certain number of cultural elites who are exceptionally interested in American or European film and television. The initial focus for satellite television by Editora Abril in Brazil in the late 1980s was to provide foreign channels in a variety of languages to former immigrants and their descendents. However, that audience base was very restricted and marginally profitable. So Abril's system was ultimately sold to its competitor, Murdoch. Interviewing people in the management for HBO in Brazil, Singapore and other regions, I find that with their target audience seems to be people who are cinema fans, not necessarily extraordinary movie collectors, but still people who spend a great deal of their time watching movies, who have the cultural capital and interest to watch a great deal of American film. From my own interviews with cable audiences in Brazil, 1989-2006, this group extends much further into the middle class than does CNN's audience, which makes it more viable as a commercial enterprise and also more likely to have considerable cultural reach and impact.

One of the more interesting genres to rise out of international and global satellite television and cable television is that of the broadly educational, but primarily entertaining documentary: Discovery Channel, Animal Planet, National Geographic, etc. From studies that I have seen in Brazil and elsewhere these seem to reach primarily out to middle classes, or those who aspire to be middle class (Straubhaar 2003), who



want to watch something entertaining but also something educational. Interviewing some of the regional management of Discovery Channel in Singapore in 2006, asking them about their balance between entertainment and education, they said that they specifically avoid calling their programming educational, not wanting to make it seem forbidding or uninteresting. They particularly push a combination of sort of good for you, sort of educational, but clearly entertaining and interesting material. This seems to be the adaptation of a documentary genre that national public service television networks had originally created, now broken down into an animal documentary genre, a nature documentary genre, a historical documentary genre, etc. All these genres have been around for a great deal of time, but Discovery Channel seems to have taken them to a more globally diverse, somewhat less nationally specific audience by making them broader and more entertaining. Talking to producers and managers of Discovery in Asia and Latin America, I have found that they are actively aware of the need to blend entertainment value and educational value to the audiences. This has resulted in tremendous global success for Discovery Channel and a proliferation of even more specific documentary channels, particularly in countries in Asia, Latin America, and elsewhere, which did not have the kind of national public service channels that had done such programs in Japan, North America, and Europe (Chris 2002). Private broadcasters have even brought these new kinds of global entertainment documentaries into Nordic countries, like Finland, where they offer an entertaining way to compete with the more serious documentaries done by public service broadcasters (Hujanen 2007).

Audience studies seem to reflect the same sense of the global documentary genre. For example, one of the first studies of slum dwelling audiences for cable TV in the Rio de Janeiro slum of Rocinha, found that parents there were particularly interested in programming that would keep their kids entertained and safe off the streets, since in their neighborhood the streets was frequently dangerous, with gun battles between drug dealers and police. So the preferred cable channels and genres in that neighborhood were cartoons and entertaining documentaries from Discovery, Animal Planet, etc., which kept kids happily indoors (Letalien 2002).

In contrast to the very global flow of documentaries, MTV is a global satellite TV brand that seems to have succeeded by localizing extensively. It kept core elements of its formula, a focus on youth with a variety of genres of music videos and other kinds of programming, and VJs (video-jockeys) or announcers who adapt MTV styles to local aesthetics (Chalaby 2002). In Brazil, in the operation I studied most intensely, the



initial MTV target in the late 1980s was middle-class and upper-middle-class youth (Flesch 1990). MTV in Brazil initially imagined an audience that would consume the sorts of things that were shown in the videos from the United States, and would have a very direct particular interest in music videos from United States. The producers and researchers for MTV Brazil I interviewed in 1989 and subsequently were very aware of that this was not the majority of Brazilian youth (MTV 1997). Most Brazilian youth would prefer to have seen a higher proportion of Brazilian music videos and fewer American heavy metal and other 1980s U.S.-style videos. However, they were cautious, initially building on the videos they already had from the USA, not wanting to encourage the cost of having a to record new videos, which weren't yet being produced already in Brazil by the music industry in the same way that they were in the United States. So they started with a more cautious mixture of U.S. and Brazilian music videos and appealed to the youth who liked that mixture, upper class youth with more previous exposure to U.S. culture. As they began to broaden their ambitions to try to reach a broader range of Brazilian youth, they increased the proportion of Brazilian music videos, locally-based interview segments and lifestyle segments etc.

### **A multi-layered Internet**

The Internet seems to run an extreme range of cultural geographic and other layers of production and identification from very global to very local, much more than broadcast television, satellite television or film. Many people worldwide do use global sites in English, such as the New York Times, Wikipedia, software sites, and games. User registration for the New York Times shows hundreds of thousands of users outside the USA, for example. UNESCO was concerned enough about the dominance of English (and a few other major languages) on the Internet to address the issue of linguistic diversity on the Internet in their Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (Unesco 2005) and in subsequent action programs (c.f. UNESCO Information Society Observatory weekly email bulletins).

However, increasingly, more people seem to use language specific sites and services. For example, the English-language version of Wikipedia is popular, drawing hundreds of thousands of global users. What are accelerating even faster, however, are increasing numbers of language versions of Wikipedia. As of August 2007, there are 174 language versions of Wikipedia that have over 100 articles in each as of 2006. Showing some level of concentration in major world languages, 12 language versions of Wikipedia have over 100 thousand entries each (Wikipedia, 2007). Electronic mail,



social networking programs, and other new Web 2.0 (or more intensely participatory and interactive Internet uses) tend to function within language groups, within social classes, within religious or other groups. For example, a recent study in the USA shows that even within the seemingly somewhat homogenized U. S. youth culture of the Internet, Facebook social networking program users tend to be somewhat better educated, whiter, more elite, and more college oriented than MySpace users (Boyd 2007) . The latter tended to be more working class, more ethnically diverse.

In many cases, many national media Web sites are far more widely used than global media Web sites. Oh My News from Korea, for instance, is one of the world's most heavily used new sites, even though it functions primarily in the Korean language primarily serving a very large and growing base of Korea news users. Likewise in Latin America and other parts of Asia or Europe, national media sites tend to be somewhat more widely used for actual news purposes than global media sites, which tend to be more likely used for entertainment or other purposes. In Europe, national public service broadcasters' Web sites are often the most heavily used (Hujanen 2007). In some ways, this reflects the trust created by national “brands” of media, often specifically public media, but often, too, private national newspapers. It also relates to the social, cultural and other capital demands made on a user or reader of news (Bourdieu 1986). For someone to knowledgeably read and use the New York Times website for news articles on a regular basis requires intense cultural capital. More than basic knowledge of English, far more than basic knowledge of U.S. and world events, further into U.S. specialized vocabulary, phrases and usages are required for someone to use a new service like the New York Times more than occasionally. If one is to be a regular intensive user, one needs to have the cultural capital required make that both easy and pleasurable.

In fact among the rapidly growing U.S. online news spaces, the most popular spaces are those of extremely localized news portals and services, according to multiple reports at the Eighth Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism, March 30-31, 2007 at the University of Texas in Austin (<http://journalism.utexas.edu/onlinejournalism/>). New services for and about specific neighborhoods, small cities, parts of larger cities like the San Fernando Valley part of Los Angeles, for example, all seem to draw intense, frequent news usage, perhaps when cumulated, more than do larger more cosmopolitan more global sites like the New York



Times or the Los Angeles Times. This reinforces our point about the continuing importance of local identity.

### **Transnational complex**

We need to look more deeply at some of the driving forces behind the growth of complex transnational layers of production, flow and identification. These include the major regional and global diasporic languages, and cultural linguistic markets, both transnational and geocultural, discussed above. They also include the flow and adaptation of capitalist models, global, transnational or regional, and in one key, related development, the growth of major media capitals (Curtin 2003) or production metropolis, and global cities (Sassen 2004).

In many parts of the world, there is a truly globalized capitalism. We see it both at basic level of basic economic forms on into specific media genre forms. It carries with it important cultural forms such as the form of modern American network style of commercial television, or the form of the commercialized music video, or the form of the Western professionalized news story. There are, however, also many regional, national and even local variations. For example, past a very basic level of capitalism itself, is there a single model for the sort of modern or capitalist modernity that many countries throughout the world now pursue? Or are there Japanese and Chinese models of capitalist media modernity, as suggested by Iwabuchi (2002) or David Harvey (2005), which now serve as models for other places in Asia, Latin America, etc. Those may be models that are more approachable and seemingly more realistic than the American, British or French models.

For an interesting example, of over half a century of life now, we can look at the forms of Latin American commercial television broadcasting and, in particular, the way they have produced their most famous product, the telenovela. There, perhaps earlier than anyplace else in the world, we can see the impact of the forms of U.S. style commercial network broadcasting which have proven so influential in the 1980s and 1990s in places like Europe. Those forms and models landed with full force much earlier in Latin America, with radio in the 1920s and with television already in the 1950s. So already by the 1930s, we saw modern American corporations used to a certain style of highly networked and highly commercialized broadcasting, which they were accustomed to use for selling their products, beginning to use and adapt the same forms to Latin America.



To take a very specific case, Colgate-Palmolive, the major U.S. multinational soap company, helped develop a specific American form of melodrama that we called soap opera in the United States. They quickly moved it to Cuba, the most developed Latin American market, first in radio in the 1930s and then in television in the 1950s, and it spread quickly throughout Latin America. That seems straightforward as a preview of top down capitalist globalization of media and culture, but we look more closely, we actually see a much more complex process. A combination of genre traditions, television industry structures, television producers, and television audiences produced the Latin American telenovela, as a distinct variation on the rather globally dispersed notion of the melodrama, of which the U.S. soap opera is just one notably successful variation. Producers, first in Cuba, then elsewhere in Latin America drew on European serial novel traditions, American radio and television soaps, Cuban and other early Latin American adaptations of those genres, and emerging local and national cultural traditions that lent themselves to melodrama on television (Lopez 1995; La Pastina, Rego et al. 2003). Audience response ensured that advertisers would supply the economic resources for continued and expanded production of telenovelas in an increasing number of countries. Audience feedback shaped the productions away from elite focused dramas toward a mass culture form that resonated more with a variety of traditions and plot devices and that could involve both men and women, peasants, urban workers, and the middle classes (Martín-Barbero, 1993). This cultural formation spread all over Latin America, with distinct adaptations variations, so that Brazilian telenovelas are quite different from those of Mexico (Hernandez, 2001).

In one of life's little ironies, probably Fidel Castro did not consciously intend to accelerate and consolidate the commercial American network form of television in the rest of Latin America when he pushed so many commercial media professionals out of Cuba in 1959. But that was exactly what happened when many highly trained scriptwriters, directors, network managers, network owners, actors and technicians left Cuba for Venezuela, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina and Peru. These professionals had their own notions of how to supply the American network model and certain genres like the variety show and telenovela. It was based on the Cuban experience, reflecting the American experience, but quickly developed a number of variations to fit the general Latin American market as well as specific places they worked. They took literally hundreds of thousands of pages of scripts and other concrete formulas that permitted





them to move their knowledge with them rather quickly and rather effectively, not unlike the rapid, massive spread of reality shows in the last 10-15 years.

One of my current projects is doing an oral history with Joe Wallach, one of the lead professionals from Time life Inc. who in 1965 went to Brazil to begin a joint venture with Roberto Marinho, the owner of O Globo newspaper and several radio stations, who wished to get into television. I find that he was aware of both the advantages and disadvantages, strengths and weaknesses of an American television model as it was taken to Latin America. He realized that certain things about the American model, particularly its financial forms, network simulcasting, and central management would seemingly work well in Brazil, but he also recognized very quickly by the end of 1965 that some of his U.S. colleagues' ideas about how to program television, principally importing a lot of American programming, would not work. It simply wasn't going to make money. The Time Life TV Globo station was in fourth place out of four in Rio. So he went looking for Brazilian professionals who could bring local programming approaches, which would be more popular with Brazilians. Here is a very early example of how even major pillars of international capitalism recognized the need to localize their strategies and adapt to local forms of capitalist development and of cultural definition of markets. So a key thing that we see in the evolution of current capitalist modernities is the adaptation of these models. This was visible early in Latin America, but also recently in East Asia South Asia, the Arab world and various parts of Europe, to the cultural linguistic and geocultural regions that both local and transnational cultural industries encountered.

We also see the growth of major production centers, media capitals (Curtin 2003) or global production cities. They include Rio de Janeiro, Mexico City, and Miami (Sinclair 2003) for Latin America, Hong Kong and Shanghai as major production centers in China, for much of Asia, Beirut and Cairo in the Arab World, etc. These centers have an increasingly global projection, but their real base has been and continues to be transnational geo-cultural and cultural linguistic markets.

### **Multiple identifications, identity and hybridity**

There is an ongoing, complex interaction between forces of economics and technology, as exemplified by many of the satellite television services, broadcast television networks, and Internet companies or institutions discussed above, and long run patterns of culture and language. To some very large degree, people in audiences come to identify with what they are shown. The extraordinary dominance of global film



distribution by the USA since the 1920s has resulted in cultural patterns of familiarity, knowledge and liking for American style films that persists in many parts of the world (Miller 2001). That creates a market defined by both political economy and culture that new networks of feature and documentary film, like HBO or Discovery, can exploit, using new technologies of television distribution. Those supply and reinforce the audiences of those who like those genres. So for large numbers of people, a specific identification with Hollywood style film builds up to where there is a layer of culture so familiar to people that Gitlin called this American cultural layer of production, flow and consumption, a familiar second culture for many people in the world (Gitlin 2001).

To take a very different example, the historical primacy of public service broadcasting over time in the Nordic countries and its ongoing creation of genres and forms of content that engage and please its audience has created patterns of goodwill, familiarity, cultural capital or knowledge, and liking that continues to guide audience preferences toward it even when competition is available. From the continued ratings success of such cultural and informational genres in the face of both broadcast and satellite/cable multi-channel TV competition, many Scandinavians seem to have ongoing identification with them that could be seen as fairly stable cultural layers of production, programming and consumption for both informational and cultural forms typically identified with public service broadcasting. To some degree, these forms are identified with national culture and also continue to connect with and reinforce a layer of what might be seen as national identity in a country like Denmark (Søndergaard 2003).

The creation of a certain linguistic or cultural space or market is intertwined with economic and technological forces. In his study of the development of nationalism, Anderson saw print capitalism as work with existing languages or dialects to standardize and spread them, via the printed word of newspapers, novels, etc. to become standardized national languages (Anderson 1983). In his work on modern India, Kumar (2006) shows how Hindi has been both spread and resisted as a national language within India by different institutions of television, at both national and regional levels. By providing ongoing news and culture for people to identify with, a number of these broadcasters, at the level of region or province within India have served to reinforce regional senses of identity, which were already based on earlier forms of language and culture, before television, radio or film.



So the interaction is indeed complex. Audience identification and more aggregated senses of cultural identity change with media forms. Culture is not static. Audience senses of identification can increase as forms of media bring them new and compelling cultural forms to identify with. This is one of the ways that layers of cultural production, flow and identification can increase, reaching the multiple layers presented earlier in this article.

However, ongoing, changing forms of culture (and language) also defines spaces and markets within which use of technologies and orientations of media institutions and businesses is defined. For example, there was a point in the history of television broadcasting in Italy, where somewhat surprisingly large audiences existed for Latin American telenovelas. As channels increased, seeking for new material to program, programmers experimented with the telenovelas and they struck a resonance or identification with parts of the audience to where European scholars began to debate whether counter-flow from the developing to developed nations might be underway (Biltereyst and Meers 2000). However, an underlying preference for locally produced versions of popular television forms could also be seen or anticipated (Straubhaar 1991) and Italian fiction production began to increase, proving profitable, and pushed the telenovelas slowly out of the main parts of the national programming schedule (Buonanno 2004). Still for some parts of the Italian audience, particularly in southern Italy, where many felt more linked with emigration and family ties to countries like Argentina and Brazil, an identification with and liking for such programs continues (Del Negro 2003). These identifications with specific programs again reflect the growth of multiple layers of both identification and identity. These are not essentialized or reified, but must be seen in a steadily changing media and cultural environment where technologies, television institutions, program forms and audience identification and identity evolve together.

This ongoing pattern of change can be seen as both hybridity and the multiplication of layers of production, programming/flow, and identification. The hybridity can be seen in ongoing cultural change through the contact of local, regional, national, transnational and global elements, liked those discussed earlier. Layers of cultural production and identification multiply as technological and economic forces allow. To people I have interviewed in Texas and in Brazil, many of these layers of culture that are made available to them and with which they come to identify, seem very solid, not something they anticipate changing. Latino immigrants to Texas that I have



interviewed, as well as Turkish immigrants to western Europe interviewed in research by Ogan (1998), show that many immigrants welcome a certain continuity of culture to be found in television from back home. They cherish that layer of culture and identification, even as they form others in their new environment.

However, these layers of cultural production and flow evolve with technological and economic possibilities. Affordable satellite television channels make it much easier for transnational immigrants to stay more closely involved and identified with their home culture. (Earlier waves of immigrants had fewer media options and were more likely to have to use media in their new hosts countries, if they wanted to use media.) They also evolve with changing, or hybridizing forms of culture, that both reflect and frame the technological and economic possibilities. So as television becomes cheaper, and people also start creating their own cultural forums on websites, we see the growth of Persian language television production in Los Angeles for Iranian immigrants there (Naficy 1993). We see even larger numbers of websites, web radio programs, and even specialized satellite TV channels for South Asian immigrants to the USA or Great Britain, some focused on events back in South Asia, many focused directly on the immigrant experience and news of their own specific community (MALLAPRAGADA 2006). These examples show the reciprocity of economic, technology, culture and media channels. People move in large numbers mostly for economic reasons, although political, familial, religious and other reasons factor in as well (Papastergiadis 2000). As they move, they take their culturally formed interests with them. That creates spaces or markets for new layers of media to act in, if economic and technological possibilities allow. All of these ultimately tend to create a new layer of production, experience and reception, that is media, identification and identity specific to the new immigrant community and its culture. That community and culture will represent both a hybridization of home and host cultures, and a new layer of media and culture in itself.

So, to conclude, this article looks at four bodies of issues and theory. First, we see the elaboration and development of new multiple layers of media production, flow, identification and, perhaps, eventually, identity. Second, these form in reciprocal interaction between technological possibilities, political-economic forces such as movement of peoples and expansion of media institutions and companies, and spaces for media created by the cultural identities and interests of concrete groups of people. The net effect of this has been the expansion of layers of production and reception of culture at the global, U.S. export empire, transnational cultural-linguistic, transnational



geo-cultural, trans-local, national, regional, global city or media capital, metropolitan and local levels.

Third, instead of the homogenization feared by earlier theorists (Hamelink 1983), we see a less drastic but perhaps equally pervasive hybridization of cultures. Both media institution professionals and audience members I have interviewed tend to articulate what they see as the increase in the number of layers or kinds of culture (often expressed as new markets by the professionals), those layers are also constantly changing as they also interact and hybridize over time. So, fourth, this is also a complex and dynamic system that is constantly evolving or emerging (Straubhaar 2007), as culture, political-economy, and technological possibilities interact and shape each other.

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