



Globalisation Of News And The Formation Of A Global Public Sphere.

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Abstract - This study has been undertaken to introspect into the impact of globalisation on global news dissemination and the subsequent formation of a new global public sphere. It will examine the power of the rich in exploiting the process to their advantage at the cost of weaker and poorer sections in the society. It will also emphasise on the term 'globalisation' and how its spread has influenced the process of global news formation.

GLOBALISATION AND ITS EVOLUTION

To begin my essay, I would like to draw upon a famous quote by Nelson Mandela, who says, "Where globalisation means, as it so often does, that the rich and powerful now have new means to further enrich and empower themselves at the cost of the poorer and weaker, we have a responsibility to protest in the name of universal freedom."

In my essay, I would first like to discuss globalisation as a term and how the world being globalised speedily influences global news and subsequently results in the formation of a new global public sphere.

Globalisation or the process of integration of financial and investment markets to operate on a global scale through varied means of communication and trade existed since the 19th century but it came into effect only when anti-globalisation pushed it to existence. This means when the protestors for the new process of globalisation opposed it as the way of dominating people's lives, anti-globalisation brought globalisation out of the business market into our daily affairs jargon. Globalisation can be described as a process beyond the territory of business and financial matters; rather a surrendering of power to large organisations as a means of keeping the poor countries in their own place. It certainly does not mean that the globalised organisations operate an individual's life or are more powerful than certain countries, but the rise of globalisation can be seen as a means to beat poverty.

Lesser restrictions in the telecommunications systems and computer networks are known as the parents of globalisation. Technologies like computers, satellites and digital media have resulted in the production of a global communication network covering the entire Earth. Journalist Thomas Friedman writes about globalisation,

'Globalisation is not simply a trend or a fad but is, rather, an international system. It is the system that has now replaced the old Cold War system, and like that Cold War system, globalisation has its own rules and logic that today directly or indirectly influence the politics, environment, geopolitics and economics of virtually every country in the world' (Friedman L. T, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*). What he means is globalisation is certainly about change and not just a choice. And this change concerns the changing media and the manner in which news concept and international journalism adapts to the changed global condition and the developing global public sphere.

GLOBALISATION AND INTERNATIONAL JOURNALISM

With the rise in globalisation, the need for news analysis based on a global scale came into being. There was a visible shift in the content of news media in that the news media started de-territorialising. It extended from being national to being international, meaning it included complex relations that flowed across national borders and continents. In a world that started to globalise, news on topics like politics, environment and ecology and relation between various countries started to be looked upon from a global angle on social reality which makes it difficult to distinguish between domestic and foreign news media content. This, in turn, demands the need for 'global journalism' that surpass the age-old domestic-foreign opposition. Thus, journalism underwent random changes or in Walter Isaacson's terms a 'glorious disruption' where the traditional method of journalism surrendered to digital technology. Global journalism, as a topic is more theoretical in its analysis of news style and news text and this news style is based on a global outlook in its representation of space, power and identity.

The concept of globalisation and the random use of internet has come to override geographical borders and territories in order to make space for different news sources and their subsequent political discourse like non-mainstream sources, citizen-based sources and in doing so, has questioned the future of traditional news media and the shape of political discourse (Reese et al., 2007). Distant mass communication systems have become central to the world in such a way that news in itself has come to become an event. It is true that we have more news than before, but it is even more sad when it comes to reporting and verification of news by professional journalists as most of the news that is spread out via the internet is inaccurate, unverified, biased and with opinions. Although the public has more access to information and are able to communicate easily, they are receiving insufficient hard news; unverified and unreliable. There are different approaches to understand the influence of global change on international journalism. Initially, international journalism was something that was relatable to foreign media correspondence but various assumptions about foreign news has overlooked the obvious boundary between domestic and foreign news media. Foreign news with its shapes and styles, the way of collecting and reporting them, all of it are controlled by various actors in organisational contexts and these in turn serve the interests and the objectives for political discourses.

According to Kevin Williams, international journalism in the 'age of globalisation', otherwise 'globalisation of news' can be understood by three approaches. The first approach focusses on the homogenic nature of foreign news and reporting brought about by standards of journalism around the world as Deuze states, 'the twentieth century history of ... journalism can be typified by the consolidation of a consensual occupational ideology among journalists in different parts of the world' (Deuze M (2005: 444)). Globalisation is found to encourage the development around the practice and result of contemporary international journalism. The second approach highlights the prominence of a new form of journalism, also known as "*global journalism*" as a response to the new globalised international society which is more cosmopolitan in its formation. On one hand, while Globalisation has 'weakened the connection between journalism and its traditional nation-state base ...' (Reese, 2008:240); Peter Berglez (2008: 847) states 'global journalism is endowed with particular epistemology, defined as the global outlook', that creates varied representations of the world compared to national outlooks of journalism within which social reality was originally framed. The third approach reasserts the role played by the nation-state in deciding journalism practice in the global age. It emphasises on the heterogenous practices of foreign correspondences and its values. Cultures, politics and societies on the national level determine foreign

news reporting throughout the world which can be looked at in various ways: the 'domestication' of foreign correspondence, the need for news audiences to analyse events worldwide, the rise of new regional and local news models, and the arrival of non-western media organisations.

GLOBAL NEWS COMMUNICATION

Throughout history, people in any corner of the world were concerned about 'news' of their local region or community but in today's globalised world, where people across distant lands are interconnected to each other, they are mostly affected by international news from different countries; be it a terrorist attack, or an earthquake or a civil strife and so on. People receive more information than they did previously, putting forth their view points and digital technologies like social media and the randomly increasing usage of internet have made this possible. In the early 20th century, international news made a comeback with many political revolutions taking place worldwide, first in Tunisia, then in Egypt where President Hosni Mubarak was expelled and moving on to Arab states where it spread rapidly in Bahrain, Libya, Jordan, Syria and the rest. The protestors on the Arab streets were filled with anger and violence, demanding their freedom and wanting for jobs.

These uprisings received help from communication media where the protestors were informed via cell phones or social media like Facebook and Twitter which escalated to the Arab publics from where Arab broadcasters like Al Jazeera spread it to the rest of the world.

Next, in March 2011, Japan came to the front-page coverage in news media when the country was shaken by a magnitude 9 earthquake following a terrific tsunami that resulted in a huge number of people being killed and victims going missing. The third largest economy of the world was severely damaged and its nuclear power plants were affected. The calamity was broadcasted world-wide and people took more interest in the news for the recovery of the great turmoil. International news communication faced another massive influence with 21st century's first war, when New York's World Trade Centre and the Pentagon in Washington, DC were attacked by terrorists and the lives of the Americans were shaken. The collapse of the two skyscrapers and the loss of 3,000 lives made the Americans feel insecure in this perilous world and it went up to the global television in fraction of seconds with live updates every minute and colour videos of the attack highlighting the crash of the twin towers by the two airliners, without any interruptions. The entire world was reported with the news; it flowed into the radio, the print media and the Internet.

Equally, there was quite a lot of interest when there was war against the Taliban in Afghanistan and the defeat of Saddam Hussein's military troop that led to a terrorist conflict in Iraq. The manner of reporting the terrific events and the response from the world reminds us of the global society in which we reside. Apart from business affairs, the world seems to come together socially and politically but these acts of terrorism remind us of the boundaries that still exist between the rich and the poor countries and how the democratic nations with their open freedom are more susceptible to such attacks. It, thus, signifies that radical terrorism still remains as the dark underside of globalisation.

The end of the twenty-first century and the beginning of the political corruptions of 2011 made the world even more perilous and as different countries started to become visible from the global economic decline, people across the world started to find news in order to predict their future and to understand the import of several Arab uprisings. The traditional news media, however, underwent disruptions due to a series of technological changes affecting the communication of the publics across the world. Digital media like mobiles, computers and laptops, the internet, email and social media like Facebook, WhatsApp have intruded so much that journalism practices and news reporting via print media, television, radio and journals have suffered great consequences which in history had reported world-wide itself. As a result, both the publics and other media forms like newspapers, broadcast media and radio were reduced.

In spite of the great political crises and the random technological changes, the news media have answered well. Although, international communication was affected by the 1990s era and the post-Cold War world and international broadcasting that became more of entertainment and information rather than propagandistic, journalists enjoyed the new rise of independent broadcast media and transmission of pop

culture by communication satellites increased media audiences to a great extent. Old global communication that was dependent on few news organisations have been lessened by the personalised digital media. Thus, with the growth in global telecommunications, the global community developed with concern for both the world news and the relationship between the events and the reporters and that is where lies the danger and the challenge of international communication whereby the journalists inform the world of the news, which is important yet imperfect and controversial. But, even then, journalists from various nations keep contributing their role to the international flow of news and popular culture in this modernised world.

GLOBAL VILLAGE TO A GLOBAL PUBLIC SPHERE

The term 'global village' by Marshall McLuhan was inspired by the dawn of the satellite age in the mid-1960s. In his days, when inter-governmental agencies launched the first satellites such as Intelsat, they distributed 'live' video clips to news pools across distant lands and oceans and combined social and cultural gaps based on those images. McLuhan's "the medium is the message" formula (McLuhan and Fiore, 1967) was then inspired by this link thus giving rise to the combination of distant unknown cultures and societies into a 'global village'. As a result, it got converted into homogenised cultures and created a new space for important political events, which though interpreted variously in different countries, created a feeling of 'sameness' and 'uniformity'.

While the new technological developments played their role in complexity and diversity of globalisation, the diverse satellite technologies created a new 'transnational' political news sphere, which further transformed traditional notions of public sphere into a new transnational space or a 'global' news sphere, not marked by 'sameness' but by global diversity. This new political dimension influences national public spheres in various ways. Firstly, it refines the traditional parallelism of 'foreign' and 'domestic' news within national public spheres. Secondly, this trans-local space enables the developing nations to set up their own world news order which is a 'self-centric' political space after traditional hierarchies. And thirdly, the new transnational news media structure also sets up new journalistic associations and transnational cooperation, thus entering the global news sphere. The flow of transnational news enters the 'life-world' realm straight away via the global satellite system and acts as a strong political and diplomatic force.

The recent method of collection and distribution of news globally was started by Reuters of Great Britain, the Associated Press of the United States and Agence France-Presse of France. These broadcasters are not more than 100 years old and continue to remain an important channel for transnational news in spite of them and other media being transformed by digital technology. The media base of the 'global public sphere' has undergone massive transformation in the 21st century. While in the mid 1980s, CNN claimed itself to be the world news leader conveying news to all parts of the globe in few minutes and even keeping up pace with BBC World Service successfully, today, numerous transnational channels concentrate on diverse political relations worldwide. Besides CNN, Al Jazeera, MBC and other popular broadcasters, there is Zee Tv that attracts 30 million Indians globally. As a result, different news audiences are discovered, one category consists of the expatriates and the other includes communities interested in political and business news contexts. It would then be correct to consider Manuel Castell's argument who considers 'network' as the new globalisation model instead of the Internet that increased the chance of a new global 'network society' (Castells, 1996) – not in the sense of 'sameness' as McLuhan states but in the sense of a new globalised 'networked individualism' (Castells, 2001) that defines 'identity' based on new culture and politics.

Journalism, thus, receives new responsibilities with these developments. Both 'foreign' and 'domestic' journalism become outdated in this new global public sphere and journalism plays the role of a mediator, circulating amongst new political discourses; the global public sphere and the new fragmented microspheres that operate at times of political crisis, and the politically diverse media atmosphere. This mediator role also facilitates discourse platforms for the restricted media environments and this discourse

deals with new models of 'inter-connections' (Robertson, 1992: 2) that are surrounded globally as a 'whole' like identity, politics, religion and economy.

The idea of a public sphere revolves around the logical relationship between a social private sphere and the public life. The logic lies in the slow alteration of public affairs being privatised and the increasing interconnection that links private and public issues together. In Castells' view, the new global news organisations are 're-organised' around a new 'network of nodes' (Castells. 1996), connections and disconnections, 'longitudes' and 'latitudes' affecting an individual's political identity within a new supra- and sub-national co-relation, passing national censorship and establishing an altogether different transnational news flow. Following this infrastructure of news, it is right to argue that the national public sphere is metamorphosed by a new logical relationship between supra- and sub-national contexts of politics and there is no doubt that the national media organisations influenced by the transnational news continue their role as the 'national gatekeeper' of news media, reaching the 'life-worlds' globally.

Summarising globalisation and global public sphere, it can be stated that there have been significant changes since time immemorial in reporting of news events and the gradual rise of globalisation as a process based on news surrounding political discourses across national boundaries. Technological developments are equally an important part of globalisation. Consequently, the media audiences upgraded from being limited to regional news to news involving various nations thus forming a global public sphere, where audiences seek to express their opinion freely and according to their choice because the true notion of journalism is the diverse nature of ideas and the freedom of expression. Concluding the essay with Albert Camus' note,

'A free press can of course be good or bad, but certainly without freedom, it will never be anything but bad. ... Freedom is nothing else but a chance to be better, whereas enslavement is a certainty of the worst.'

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