

Global television flows
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One of the clearest differences to emerge between global TV studies and international communication is the spatial frame. International communications grew out of a focus on developments within nations and interactions between them. The move toward a global frame has opened up new terrain of multiple media spaces of production, flow, identification and identity that are emerging in what might be seen as a multi-layered system of global or world television. For example, here is a partial mapping of some prominent current levels of global flow.

U.S. continuing production and export is based in Hollywood structural and cultural power, which as Miller (2004), Straubhaar (2007) and others have shown, is still quite prominent in the television schedules of many countries.

Other national to global producers, genres and audiences, such as telenovelas (from Latin America), anime (from Japan), Bollywood (from India), etc., which have fewer programs placed in television schedules than does the USA, but are significant in some regions or specialties (Biltereyst and Meers 2000; Iwabuchi 2002).

Global format producers are another distinct category that provides a significant fraction of imported formats on which national production is often actually based (Moran 2004). These work with national or regional partners to locally produce versions of global formats like Big Brother, (fill in the blank) Idol, Pop Stars, Who Wants to Be a Millionaire, etc., which appear as national production in this study, but are in fact really a new category of their own.

Global genre producers and audiences in global genres like travel, documentaries, which are centered in the U.K. and the USA, but are very visible in global and regional cable channels.

Transnational cultural-linguistic television producers and spaces, consisting of former colonial powers and colonies, and their migrants elsewhere, like the Anglophone or Spanish-speaking spaces (Sinclair 1999).

Geo-cultural regional television producers and spaces, based on shared languages, histories, geographic proximity, which is quite prominent in the television schedules of some countries, which belong to large geo-cultural groups, like Spanish speaking Latin America (Sinclair, Jacka et al. 1996; Straubhaar 2007).

Geographically based cultural trade blocs, like the European Union (EU) or NAFTA, can encourage transnational TV trade and flow within the bloc (Galperin 1999).

National television is still in many ways dominant in many countries, particularly where national markets are well developed and where national regulatory requirements and government incentives also support it (Straubhaar, 2007).

Regional television in some larger, more culturally and linguistically distinct provinces or regions, like Kerala in India, Catalonia in Spain, Scotland in Great Britain (Kumar, 2006).

Metropolitan television producers located in global cities or media capitals (Curtin, 2008), like Shanghai.

I would like to focus on the patterns and dynamics at play in the shifts of relative production and distribution power between these levels. One broad generalization across a great deal of globalization research asserts that the power of the nation state is now limited from above by global, transnational and regional forces and from below by the force of regionalism and global cities. I would propose that this may be less true in television than in some other areas of globalization because of the power many states retain in licensing channels, defining markets, and reinforcing “national” identity through schooling, mapping, museums, state advertising, etc.

However, reversing field to focus on reception, I would also like to argue that such national identities are increasingly best seen as one variable, but often strong layer in the seeming emergence of complex, multilayered identities.