Title: Future perspectives in International Communications and Development: where do we go from here?

Organisers: Dr Carolina Matos and Professor Petros Iosifidis

Centre for International Communication and Society (CICS)  http://www.city.ac.uk/arts-social-sciences/sociology/research/centre-for-international-communications-and-society

Abstract

The year 2015 is being seen as a year for global action and expansion of some of the aims of the 2015 eight Millennium Development Goals (see http://www.alliance2015.org/fileadmin/user_upload/MDGs.pdf), including the reduction of gender inequality and the empowerment of women, as well as the eradication of extreme poverty.

There are some reasons to be cheerful: 90% of children in developing regions now enjoy primary education, gender inequality has fallen in much of Latin America and the Caribbean and countries like China and Brazil have managed to significantly reduce inequality in the last few decades. Since the financial crisis of 2008, much of the developed countries have seen an increasing rise in the gap between the rich and the poor, pressures on the welfare state, higher levels of unemployment, flexible working and also a striking rise of homelessness throughout European cities like London and Paris. The year 2014 also saw far-left parties, with a clear anti-austerity message, reach government in countries like Greece (SYRIZA) or become very popular (PODEMOS in Spain). The World Economic Forum in January 2015 also discussed an Oxfam report that underlined how the high income gap between the rich and the poor poses significant future problems for the global community. Thus the discussion on how to pursue a better path for development and improvement of democratic processes, and the ways in which the media can assist in this process, has become all the more urgent.

This conference is an opportunity for Masters and PhD students to develop more their ideas and research interests in a conference setting, with the support of academics and practitioners. Students who have completed the MA in International Communication and Development and the MA in Media and Communication at City University London in the last years have either progressed their studies to undertake a doctoral degree or gone on to work in the UN, European Parliament and other NGOs. They have shown a keen interest in the role of social media for development, gender development programmes and the uses of media and communications for the reduction of inequality and the strengthening of democracy throughout the world. This conference will provide a forum for addressing some of the core themes raised by these students, ranging from theoretical frameworks on the role of media in development to the uses of the media in creating awareness of development issues.

Questions asked here include: What constitutes development, and to whom? How can we theorise media and development in the 21st century? What role does the media and ICTs have in the development process? How can the media better contribute? What are some of the challenges that the BRIC countries are facing? Can they build a new communication order? How can we re-think media and development in Africa and India? Can social movements have a wider role in the future? What makes a development programme effective, and what can we learn from those that have been successful? Can gender development programmes also work on addressing ingrained cultural habits and traditional views of masculinity? How can we better theorise development, and the role of the media, for the future? What is the role of journalism today in previous authoritarian regimes?
Core themes

- Theoretical frameworks on media and development
- Gender and development programmes; Human rights approaches
- The role of ICTs, NGOS, the state and the market in development
- Social movements and participatory democracy
- The future role of the BRIC countries and area studies
- Sustainable development; Development and democratisation

Organisation and participants

This conference takes place over the course of 2 days and includes talks by keynote speakers working in the field of media and development, international journalism and communications, cultural studies and sociology. There will be different workshops sessions where postgraduate and research students would have the opportunity to give papers and present their work. The conference is organised by the CCIS at the Dept. of Sociology, but also welcomes the participation of other departments at City, including International Politics and Creative Industries, which has recently joined the Sociology Department, as well as Journalism. The conference includes the support of some of our university partners, such as Loughborough University, the CAMRI Research Centre at the University of Westminster; Media and Communications, LSE; the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford, City University and the University of Sussex. Speakers include academics and practitioners, including NGOs representatives and former as well as practising journalists. Current and former MA students, as well as PhD students, will be invited to attend and have an opportunity to present their work in a professional and academic environment.

Deadline for abstracts:

5 January 2016

Please send your 300 word abstracts and suggestions for papers to Dr Carolina Matos (Carolina.Matos.1@city.ac.uk) and/or Professor Petros Iosifidis (P.Iosifidis@city.ac.uk) by 5 January 2016.
Conference programme

Date: Wednesday 20 January and Thursday 21 January 2016

Wednesday 20 January

9.30 – 10.00 – Registration

10.00 – 10.15 – Welcome and introductions
Dr Carolina Matos and Professor Petros Iosifidis

10.15 – 10.50

SESSION ONE – “After cultural citizenship”, talk by Professor Toby Miller, Institute for Media and Creative Industries, Loughborough University in London

10.50-11.05 – Coffee break

11.10 – 11.50

SESSION TWO - “The Media, development and democratisation – three unhappy bedfellows”, Professor of Journalism Ivor Gaber, University of Sussex, and the UK’s representative on Unesco’s Intergovernmental Council of the International Programme for the Development of Communications

11.50 – 12.30

SESSION THREE – “Children, labour and media in India”, Shakuntala Banaji, Programme Director for the MSc in Media, Communication and Development in the Department of Media and Communications at LSE

12.30 – 1.30 – Lunch

1.30 – 2.10

SESSION FOUR – “The Alliance for press and the role of political communication in development”, Jairo Lugo-Ocando, University of Sheffield, Lecturer and former foreign correspondent

2.10-3.00 pm

Workshop session 1: Student presentations (Chair: Dr Carolina Matos)

3.00 – 3.15 Coffee break

3.15 – 4.15 pm

Workshop session 2: Student presentations (Chair: Professor Petros Iosifidis)

4.30 – 6.00pm - Reception and drinks
Thursday 21 January

10.00-10.40

SESSION ONE – “BRICS building a new global communication order?”, Daya Thussu, Professor of International Communication and Co-Director of India Media Centre, University of Westminster

10.45-11.00 – Coffee break

11.00-11.40

SESSION TWO – “Nations and competition: upgrading strategies in the global TV content value chain”, Jean Chalaby, Professor of International Communications, City University London

11.40-12.20 am

SESSION THREE - “The power of authoritarian governments on the news media: the cases of China, Russia, Egypt and Turkey, John Lloyd, Senior Research Fellow at Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford

12.30- 1.30 – Lunch

1.30- 2.20

Workshop session 3: Student presentations (Chair: Dr Dan Mercea)

2.30-2.45 pm – Coffee break

3.00 – 4.00pm

Workshop session 4: Student presentations (Chair: Dr Carolina Matos)

4.00 – 5.30 pm

ROUND UP DISCUSSION: “Media and development: the challenges for the future in a changing world”, with the participation of keynote speakers and questions from the audience

Chaired by Dr Carolina Matos and Professor Petros Iosifidis

5.30 – 7.00 pm – Drinks Reception
Abstracts:

1) *BRICS Building a New Global Communication Order*, Professor of International Communication and Co-Director of India Media Centre, Daya Thussu, University of Westminster, London

The international presence of media from the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) is likely to expand exponentially with the growing convergence of mobile communications technologies and content via an altered and multi-lingual internet. The predominance of English on the internet might also be undermined, creating tendencies towards a fragmented internet. China, which hosts the world’s largest blogging population and its version of Facebook - QZone – had more than 600 million users by 2014; while Weibo (the Chinese version of Twitter), had an equally large following and is increasingly influencing mainstream journalism within the Sino media-sphere. Internet users in India are expected to reach 600 million by 2020, driven by wireless connections. Russia already has the highest internet penetration among the BRICS nations. In Brazil too, the internet is expanding at a rapid pace, while the growth of mobile internet in South Africa is likely to increase as 3G becomes more affordable. What implications will such digital connectivity have for global news flows and information and communication agendas, both in the BRICS countries and beyond?

This presentation will aim to evaluate how current and potential developments in digital, internet-based media in the BRICS countries might impact on global communication. It will map these developments and analyse them within the context of questions about internet governance and suggest that, given the scope and scale of change in BRICS countries, a New Global Communication Order may be evolving for the digital age.

2) *The power of authoritarian governments on the news media: the cases of China, Russia, Egypt and Turkey*, John Lloyd, Senior Research Fellow at Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford

Governments in four major states - China, Russia, Egypt and Turkey - have in the past 3-4 years made clear that they will not tolerate news media which report on issues which they regard as forbidden, or only to be discussed within clearly marker parameters; or to print or broadcast opinions critical of the government and/or the ruling party. The coming to power of Xi Jinping in China has been accompanied by a strong reassertion of Party-State control over the press which had enjoyed a measure of freedom prompted by the partial privatisation of the news media by Deng Xiao Peng from the eighties onward, and then again after the Tienanmen massacres. Xi has brought back the Maoist concept of "politicians' run newspapers" to emphasise that some lines cannot be crossed, and that reportage on the forbidden areas must never be sanctioned.

The seizure by Russia of the Ukrainian areas of Crimea and of the Donbass area has been accompanied by a propaganda blitz stronger than anything seen since the early 1980s, that is, before the coming of Mikhail Gorbachev. It is augmented by a well funded international channel, RT, which mixes critical reporting and commentary on the west with propaganda which, though less fevered than that broadcast by the Russian domestic channels, is nevertheless unmistakably hostile. As in China, the institutions of liberal democracy, including the news media, are represented as hypocritical and deeply biased: more than any other media, the Russian propagandists concentrate on showing that the western media have no independence from the states in which they work and the companies which own them.

Turkey has put many journalists in jail, alleging they were part of criminal conspiracies against the state. Censors and government controllers now work in the main newsrooms; and the few remaining oppositionist papers and channels are under constant pressure. Since the period flowering of opposition its and critical news media at the end of true Mubarak period and the year of Moslem Brotherhood rule in Egypt, the press and broadcast channels have reverted to their familiar posture of obeisance to the state. Egyptian editors and owners agreed last year that they would cease all criticism of the military government headed by Field Marshall al-Sisi, in view of the terrorist threat to the stature. The Net and the social media give opposition forces another
medium in which to work, and in all of these states, the bloggers and tweeters are active. However, their use also alerts the authorities to their presence and makes it easier to close them down.

3) “Children, labour and media in India”, Shakuntala Banaji, Programme Director for the MSc in Media, Communication and Development’ in the Department of Media and Communications at LSE

A range of scholars concerned with learning theories, mediation, and risk, have explored the ways in which children use, learn from or are vulnerable to the effects of particular forms of digital media and technologies, from aps and videogames to Facebook, Snapchat and Instagram. Particularly in Europe, Australia and North America, and in wealthier communities in the global south, this has had some notable benefits in relation to children’s learning, and safety online, as well as in drawing attention to lack of digital literacy as an axis of inequality. However, a little assessed side-effect of the normalisation of child-related digital risk and digital success discourse has been a loss of focus on examining ongoing non-digital harms, dangers and possibilities facing hundreds of millions of children and youth in the global south or, at best, a celebration of their resilience in the face of these harms.

This paper which is drawn from my forthcoming book on Children and Media in India examines discourses and formulations of a wealthy world media and development agenda for children and the implications for poor children in India. Based on original case studies, observations, interviews and focus groups with children, it focuses on children’s exclusion from multiple spheres of mediated power, their articulation in complex discourses of class, caste and gender, and their inventive, productive use of mediated and non-mediated tools in relation to exclusion, labour and school work. The paper concludes by suggesting a critique of wealthy-world discourses on childhood and risk in relation to the unequal circumstances in which children from different classes encounter media and exhibit socially productive agency.

4) The Media, Development and Democratisation - three unhappy bedfellows”, Professor of Journalism Ivor Gaber, University of Sussex, and the UK’s representative on Unesco’s Intergovernmental Council of the International Programme for the Development of Communications

In 2014, Malawi experienced its first-ever tripartite elections involving presidential, parliamentary and local government contests. The role of the media was monitored in a major operation covering radio, television, newspapers, news websites and social media. The results revealed that, with the exception of state-controlled media, news outlets played a broadly positive role, providing fair coverage for the four leading candidates and reporting on a broad range of topics. Social media provided a lively platform for the views and opinions of mainly partisan participants (presumably mostly from the urban elite). On the negative side, coverage of the presidential and to a lesser extent the parliamentary contests dominated, so that the amount of news about local government issues was minimal. The most important negative aspect of the campaign was the one-sided coverage provided by the two state radio channels, the state television station and its online news service.

5) Nations and competition: upgrading strategies in the global TV content value chain, Professor of International Communications, Jean Chalaby, City University London

A startling aspect of the TV format revolution has been the emergence of a new trade leader: Great Britain. In a short timeframe a nation used to relying heavily on US imports, whose home-grown dramas were once deemed too gritty for export, has turned itself into the world’s leading format exporter. This chapter begins with the story of this transformation as it remains a benchmark for upgrading strategies in the TV industry. Can this process be duplicated elsewhere? Gary Gereffi defines industrial upgrading as a ‘process of improving the ability of a firm or an economy to move to more profitable and/technologically sophisticated capital- and skill-intensive economic niches’. Indeed, once acquainted with formats, many countries consider their position in the global TV format commodity chain and work towards moving from stage one: (re)produce
foreign IP, toward stage two: create local IP for local consumption, and on to stage three: export local IP. This chapter assesses the upgrading strategies of a few nations that have embarked on the journey from the local production of imports to the local creation of formats.

6) The Alliance for Progress and its lessons for the future of political communication in development, Jairo Lugo-Ocando, School of Media and Communications, University of Leeds

This presentation focuses on the Alliance for Progress as a set of policies that came to define news reporting of development in the context of the Cold War and the decades to come even after the fall of the Berlin Wall. In using it as a case study, we aim to examine in particular the role of political communication in the articulation of news about the developing world and how this has shaped the way the media covers development issues and policy. The idea is to examine the process of political communication that took place at the time, with a particular focus on the ways in which JFK advisers presented the programme to the media through press conferences and press releases and the background documents that accompanied the preparation of these materials. In so doing, the chapter also examines the way in which these stories appeared in the news media in the US and some Latin American countries, and analyses this content in the light of ideological discourses on development. Overall, the paper hopes to offer an interdisciplinary and historicised understanding of how development policy has been presented to the wider public, and, at the same time, to demonstrate not only how policy formulation and propaganda goals are often intrinsically linked but also how neither development policy nor journalism can be disentangled from propaganda.

7) After Cultural Citizenship, Professor of Cultural Studies, Toby Miller, Institute for Media and Creative Industries, Loughborough University in London

‘After Cultural Citizenship’ will look at the how the three principal forms of citizenship—the political, the economic, and the cultural—have evolved and why they need to be reintegrated and merged with environmental citizenship. The consumption and identity aspects of culture have surged in recent times to the cost of the two earlier types of citizenship and without sufficient links to the environmental'. The keynote draws on earlier books, The Well-Tempered Self: Citizenship, Culture, and the Postmodern Subject (The Johns Hopkins UP, 1993), and Cultural Citizenship: Cosmopolitanism, Consumerism, and Television in a Neoliberal Age (Temple UP, 2007) and numerous keynotes given on this topic in the US and Latin America on similar subjects.

8) Rethinking Media and Development in Africa, Winston Mano, Director of African Media Centre and course leader of the MA in Media and Development, University of Westminster

The imperative to rethink the relationship between media and development is premised on the unprecedented changes to both media and society. Not only has the emergence of new information technologies such as mobile phones transformed the role and effectiveness of the media but it has also coincided with local and wider transformations, all of which have implications for development themes. In post-independence Africa many development questions remain unanswered. Part of the problem is the continuing failure of thinkers and practitioners to deal with change in the broader context of old and new paradigms that inform development policy-making on the continent. There are also new questions about the role of “new” and “old” media; public and private media as well as the changing development intentions of the state, business, civil society groups, regional bodies, continental institutions and international actors. The increased role of China in Africa and the rise of BRICS are renewing debates about South-South and North-South media-led development options. There are also questions about how development initiatives use media and communication through participation. The paper is interested in broadly rethinking media-related developmental alternatives available to Africa in the digital and global age.
Our partners: