

Theorizing Global Media as Global Discourse

ULRIKA OLAUSSON¹
Örebro University

Within the field of global media studies, there is an ongoing conflict between the globalists, who emphasize the media's pertinent role in globalization processes, and the skeptics, who stress the continuing stability of the nation-state paradigm as regards the media. Nonetheless, these two positions share one fundamental view on global media: that the proper objects of study are those media whose global nature is defined in terms of geographic reach. In the discourse perspective theorized in this article, however, "globality" is instead viewed as a discursive feature. It is argued that the established understanding of global media as media of transnational reach needs to be complemented with a discourse approach—focusing on the very knowledge production of "the global."

Keywords: global media, transnational media, European identity, global journalism, news media

Introduction

Along with an intensified general research interest in global interconnections, the body of empirical and theoretical research on media globalization has rapidly grown in recent decades. This research has comprised two basic positions, labeled by Held and McGrew (2000) as the "globalists" and the "skeptics" (Cottle, 2009). The skeptical view emphasizes the persistent national features of the news media, the digital divide between the "haves" and the "have nots" (e.g., Hafez, 2007, 2009), and the global dominance of Western media conglomerates (e.g., Herman & McChesney, 1997), whereas the globalist viewpoint underscores the possibilities for transnational²media systems and communication technology to contribute to the creation of a global public sphere and a networked society (e.g., Cardoso, 2012; Volkmer, 2003).

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² The term "transnational" is used in this article to describe events, technology, processes, connections, and the like that transcend nation-state borders but do not necessarily encompass the entire globe (Hannerz, 1996).

Ulrika Olausson: ulrika.olausson@oru.se

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Nonetheless, these two positions—their obviously conflicting views notwithstanding—have in common one fundamental and largely taken-for-granted assumption about global media: both interpret global media as media networks or technology that are global (or at least transnational) in terms of geographic reach. As a complement to the focus on transnational media networks, this article theorizes a discourse approach to the study of global media. In the discourse theoretical perspective, which is an emergent trajectory of the field (Cottle, 2009), “global” is understood as a discursive feature, and it is argued that global media cannot be reduced to media of transnational reach; a global discourse might develop in any kind of media, be it local, national, or transnational, as well as in any kind of media content—local, domestic, or foreign (Berglez, 2008; Olausson, 2010). Any medium might, in fact, be labeled “global” if it provides its audiences with a global interpretative framework. Thus, this article defines and theorizes global media, not in structural terms (geographic reach), but as global news discourse.

I will develop this position first by examining the arguments of the line of research that equates global media with transnational media networks, including its contradictory arguments about the ability of these networks to function as global media. Following this, the discourse perspective will be introduced and exemplified with some empirical examples from a study on the emergence of a transnational (European) identity in national news reporting on global climate change (Olausson, 2010). The article ends with a discussion in which the discourse theoretical approach is put in relation to broader issues of cultural and political transformation.

Global Media as Transnational Media Networks

By necessity, the research strands that deal with global media in terms of transnational media networks or technologies are outlined below with rather broad strokes, and the presentation might be somewhat lacking in detail and precision. This is the price to be paid when trying to squeeze the complexity of a research field into rather rigid boxes. Nonetheless, this categorization will hopefully elucidate the fruitfulness of granting added emphasis to the discourse approach in the study of media globalization.

Cross-border communication technologies such as the Internet, mobile phones, and satellites have contributed to the deterritorialization of space over the last decades, and transnational media networks and news services such as CNN, BBC World News, Fox News, and Al Jazeera have entered and transformed the media landscape. The rapidly increasing complexity of global communication infrastructures has generated theories about the emergence of a “network society” (Castells, 1996; 2009) and a “network journalism” reflecting the new modes of connectivity (Bardoel & Deuze, 2001). The role and future of traditional journalism have come into question along with technological convergence and the proliferation of multifunctional, portable devices such as the mobile phone, which have made it possible also for the ordinary citizen to compile, receive, and share information widely and across borders (Hermida, 2010). However, despite the technological advances, severe skepticism about the ability of trans-boundary communication technology and transnational media networks to break free from the nation-state logic has been expressed.

Hafez (2007), as an example of this skeptical viewpoint, argues that there is not enough empirical evidence of a media system that could accurately be described as "global" in the sense of enhancing the possibilities of a global public sphere. Not even the communication technology most associated with cross-border communication, the Internet, has proved to fulfill this expectation, according to Hafez (2007). Most people use this technology locally—to communicate with people in their nearby surroundings—not to engage in cultural interaction across nation-state borders. Furthermore, the necessary technological means are far from being globally diffused; "no electricity, no Internet," as was pointed out by Sparks (2007b, p. 152). Instead, the majority of empirical evidence points in the direction of reinforced stability of the nation-state paradigm. Information and news may be transnational in character, but the media in fact still are, to a considerable extent, local and national phenomena (Hafez, 2007). In times of war, Western propaganda is also present in transnational media, as are polarizing perspectives of "us" and "them" and stereotypical depictions of the "other" (Hafez, 2007, 2009; Thusssu, 2003). The nation-state paradigm is, according to this view, as powerful as ever before and has, in several respects, even gained in importance. Hafez (2007) illustratively labels this viewpoint in the field of global media studies "the myth of media globalization," and Sparks (2007a) dismisses the entire theoretical framework of globalization, arguing that current developments are better explained as part of the continuing capitalist and imperialist expansion (cf. Calhoun, 2007; Nohrstedt & Ottosen, 2001).

The accusation of imperialism directed against transnational media systems derives from the well-established field of international communication, which is based on the political economy tradition. This research field has a long history of persistently arguing that global media are in fact best described as Western (or American) media, at most of global scope (e.g., Herman & McChesney, 1997; Thusssu, 2000; Schiller, 1993). The central argument of these scholars is that escalating media conglomeration has led to a notable Western (American) bias both in terms of ownership and with regard to the distribution of media products. The media achieve their global characteristics as a result of purchases made by a small number of Western, predominantly U.S.-based multinational media giants, who distribute their products—permeated with neoliberal values and Western lifestyles—all over the globe. Even the "glocalization" that takes place when cultural products are tailored to fit a specific local market is viewed as a commercial strategy and as such nothing more than yet another sign of cultural imperialism (Sparks, 2007b). The rise of competing non-Western media networks such as Al Jazeera notwithstanding, the westernizing tendencies of global media have not been eliminated because the power of Western media, and particularly U.S.-dominated media networks such as CNN, is not only restricted to their own large-scale activities; they set the agenda also for other networks (Thusssu, 2003).

Thus, claims about cultural imperialism and cultural homogenization have been made, and warnings have been issued about the democratic dangers that surface when it is no longer possible to hold media institutions accountable to political regulation at the nation-state level. The prospects for democracy do not seem any brighter if we add the argument that active citizens, because of the commercial logic of global media, over time transform into pure consumers in Western-dominated markets (e.g., Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Herman & McChesney, 1997). The consequences of the ravages of seemingly global media, it is alleged, are harmful both to indigenous cultures and to democracy. In this fashion, global media counteract rather than promote a global public sphere and contribute to the maintenance and stability of Western (U.S.) dominance.

In the research tradition of international communication, media conglomeration, concentration, and commercialization have functioned as the analytical point of departure—restricting the interest to the shape and structure of transnational media institutions—and claims about media effects have been made without much analytical attention being paid to the actual reception and use among locally situated audiences. As a counterbalance to this macroperspective, the research field of cultural studies has instead focused on the microdimension of global media (e.g., Barker, 1999; Crane, 2002; Tomlinson, 1999). Instead of viewing the impacts of global media as a one-way process that completely erases local cultures, scholars within this research tradition emphasize processes of cultural “creolization” (Hannerz, 1996) or “hybridization,” that is, the creation of completely new cultural expressions in the encounter between different cultural forms (Appadurai, 2000). The idea of the “active audience,” quite capable of negotiating and opposing media information, has been a guiding principle in cultural studies. Suggestions have even been made (though not uncontested) that the opportunities to pick and choose cultural forms because of the rapid development of communication technologies and the creative hybridization that follows, will most likely lead to new and improved conditions for global dialogue (Lull, 2007). Thus, cultural studies have to a considerable extent problematized the idea of the homogenizing effects of global media and questioned the cultural imperialism thesis of the international communication field.

In this way, at least part of the cultural studies tradition has expressed a brighter view of transnational media systems’ ability to provide or contribute to a global public sphere. Other researchers (e.g., Chalaby, 2003; Thompson, 1995) optimistically argue that these media play a pivotal role in transforming understandings of time and space as both constituting and constituted by globalization. Because of the deterritorialized nature, diverse audiences, and independence of any national loyalties of these media, arguments about their ability to loosen up distinctions between domestic and foreign have been pursued:

The cross-border coverage of transnational television networks, their multinational audience and international production operations tear apart the relationship between place and television and challenge the traditional relationship between broadcasting and the nation-state. (Chalaby, 2003, p. 457)

Global broadcasting corporations not only provide people with a better understanding of global politics (Chalaby, 2003), they also offer new journalistic styles and formats able to transgress the nation-state outlook and, in a dialectic relationship with national news angles, give rise to new horizons for political identity and citizenship (Volkmer, 2003). A globalized journalistic network is emerging that involves traditional media as well as blogs and other types of online communication platforms for user-generated content (Heinrich, 2008), and social mediated networks are ascribed the ability to reshape our collective identity and to influence the very ways in which political participation occurs. The ideology of sharing, which is fostered within online networks, is not restricted to the sharing of files but includes also the sharing of “ideas or the organization of events toward a common objective” (Cardoso, 2012, p. 201). Accordingly, transnational media and communication technology have been attributed the potential to constitute or contribute to a global, or at least a transnational, public sphere (Chalaby, 2003; Volkmer, 2003).

The perspectives accounted for above are fairly well established in the research field of global media. The main arguments of international communication and of cultural studies respectively are frequently discussed in the literature (e.g., Rantanen, 2005), as are the globalist and the skeptic perspectives (e.g., Cottle, 2009). Despite their conflicting opinions when it comes to the media's relation to globalization, the globalists and the skeptics share at least one basic viewpoint on global media, namely that the proper objects of study first and foremost are those media whose global nature is defined in terms of geographic reach. The discourse perspective that will now be discussed takes a somewhat different stance toward this assumption.

Global Media as Global Discourse

The discourse approach to global media proposed here does not direct specific attention to the geographic reach of the media, but focuses primarily on the very *epistemology of the global* (Berglez, 2008). As pointed out by Cottle (2009) in his discussion of the principle paradigms structuring the field of global media studies, it is necessary to go beyond the paradigms of "global dominance" and "global public sphere" (p. 28), since these approaches to global media fail to explain how issues such as crises of different kinds are mediated and constituted in practice and how they, through their formation in the news media, achieve their "global" characteristics:

Global crises are principally constituted *epistemologically* as "global crises" through the news media where most of us get to know about them and where they are visualized, narrativized, publicly defended and sometimes challenged and contested. (Cottle, 2009, p. 165, emphasis in original)

Admittedly, local or national crises, such as 9/11, the 2010 flooding in Haiti, or the 2011 Egyptian revolution, need the connectivity that a cross-border communication infrastructure provides in order to become known, more or less simultaneously, to people around the globe. But, to achieve their global features—to become *global* crises, involving people and generating action across the world—they are entirely dependent on discursive constructions of them as such.

Extending this line of argument, when studying the production of knowledge about the global, it is necessary to acknowledge national media as equally important objects of study as any media of transnational reach. As Robertson (2008) argues, the issue of media globalization is an empirical question, and the assumption of most authors that global broadcasters are, or at least should be, more inclined to produce global outlooks than national broadcasters, must be empirically demonstrated rather than axiomatically asserted. In the debate on global media, however, national media, which doubtlessly still are the media that most people turn to, are most often dismissed as not significant knowledge producers concerning the global because of their inclination to depict the world according to nation-state logic (Altmeppen, 2010; Hafez, 2007, 2009). This logic saturates much of their content, not least in the form of what Billig (1995) terms "banal nationalism," a national mode of reporting that makes the world orbit around the nation-state, and in terms of taken-for-granted conceptions of the world as constituted by self-governing national "islands" rather than being a complex transnational network (Berglez & Olausson, 2011). In national media, the domestic and foreign worlds are, by tradition, separated, and the nation-

state becomes disconnected from the rest of the world (Berglez, 2007). At best, relations between the domestic and foreign are constructed through the "domestication" of foreign events, that is, by the addition of a national angle to the story from "outside" in order to make the event more relevant to the national audience as it is perceived.

This tendency of national media to reproduce and maintain a nation-state logic and identity through domesticated news discourse has been thoroughly explored (Clausen, 2004; De Vreese, 2001; Riegert, 2011; Roosvall, 2010) and must of course be acknowledged. However, there is a need to revisit the concept of domestication and take its investigation beyond the genre of foreign news—by far the most common object of study when exploring international journalism (Riegert 2011, p. 1567). I would suggest that the everyday reporting of events or phenomena of transnational scope (irrespective of news genre) is just as relevant an object of study, because such events, as a result of their borderless character, have the potential to trigger discursive transformation. In a recent discourse analysis of the climate reporting in Indian, Swedish, and U.S. newspapers (Olausson, 2013), three modes of domestication were identified, of which only one displayed the "traditional" characteristics in the sense of full adaptation of the climate issue to a national context. The other two domestication modes were quite different in nature. One created explicit interconnections between the national or local and the global, for instance by situating Earth Hour, as it took place in a small municipality in Sweden, within the global framework of the event, while the other actually worked in a counter-domesticating manner, that is, entirely lacked the nationalizing elements and constructed a unified world, without any epicenter, around the issue of climate change. Obviously, domesticated discourse is still strong in national news media, but its nature might be more diversified than has been recognized by previous research.

Thus, the domestic outlook of national news media should not be viewed as totally precluding other, transnational or global outlooks on the world. As suggested by Volkmer (2003), national media are to an increasing extent influenced by transnational media styles and formats. Furthermore, and even more importantly, because of the globalization of risks such as climate change, and conflicts such as transnational terrorism or the Global War on Terror (as labeled by George W. Bush), national discourse is constantly (and perhaps to an increasing extent) challenged by transnational or global discourses that strive for the hegemonic position (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). It is thus not a question of *either* national *or* global discourse but *both-and*, with national and local views functioning in interaction with transnational or global outlooks (Beck, 2006).

In a similar fashion, Hjarvard (2001) suggests that the possible emergence of a global public sphere should be viewed in terms of *both-and*; the transnational communicative space that has come into existence through the development of transnational media should be seen as a supplement to national public spheres. The globalizing tendencies of politics, economics, and culture have put the national public sphere under constant pressure, as has the increasing connectivity with other national public spheres. This will ultimately lead to what Hjarvard labels a "global reflexivity," since fewer and fewer topics can be dealt with without including information from "outside." In this way, national public spheres will gradually become deterritorialized through the "increased presence of global *connections* within the national framework" (Hjarvard 2001, p. 24, emphasis added). Like Hjarvard, Cottle (2009) emphasizes the media's ability to provide

a transnational and global perspective on a problem that both migrates across and transcends national frames of reference or explanation, exposing international *interconnections*, contextualizing motives and exploring both the scope of the problem and its human consequences. (Cottle 2009, p. 100, emphasis added)

The issue of whether or not the media are capable of displaying global or transnational connections is pivotal to the discourse approach to global media suggested here. Global discourse in the news media is, as argued by Berglez (2008), characterized by the depiction of connections between people, processes, events, and phenomena at the local, national, transnational, and global levels. If a global discourse is present, the most local (in terms of geography) of all media might be labeled "global" (in terms of discourse), providing a global interpretative framework by linking national and transnational identities or positioning a local event in a global context or vice versa. This focus on interconnections between various geopolitical scales also makes the global news style quite different from the traditional foreign news style, which primarily reports from one nation to another without displaying any connections between the two (Berglez, 2008).

Thus, the decisive criterion of global media, from a discourse theoretical perspective, is the ability to display complex and often subtle connections between various geopolitical scales (cf. Ibold & Ireri, 2012). These relations do not have to be of the "objective" or realist kind to be acknowledged as building blocks of a global discourse. More precisely, a global discourse does not have to comprise "real" relations of causality, motives, and interconnections (for instance that it is the carbon dioxide emissions of the First World that is the cause of the extreme droughts in the Third World). The connections displayed in media discourse could also be of a purely constructivist nature, that is, be the "creations" of media logic itself. The inherent characteristics of news media, such as their preference for dramatic and emotionally charged reporting (perhaps occasionally also supplemented with the journalist's deliberate intent to incite action among citizens) sometimes lead to the emergence of a global discourse that involves interconnections between people across vast distances.

A telling example of this kind of global discourse, building on pure constructivist connections, is the "globalization of emotions" (Cottle, 2009, p. 99) that the media have engaged in over the last decades in relation to human suffering caused by wars or natural disasters. As noted by Nohrstedt (2009, cf. Shaw, 1996), there has been an increasing tendency in the news media to display the "true face" of war, that is, the casualties and human suffering it causes, something which could be viewed as an invitation to audiences around the world to unite in compassionate responses. In her seminal work on "the spectatorship of suffering" Chouliararki (2006) discusses on the one hand how the various routines of the media, such as almost endless repetition, in all probability create distance between the audience and the distant sufferers, and on the other hand how the media are capable also of establishing an "imaginary 'we' that brings all spectators together in the act of watching" (p. 24). Another example is Robertson's (2008) exploration of the news reporting on the 2004 Asian tsunami. In searching for a cosmopolitan outlook deriving from compassion for and empathy with the sufferers, she examines five nationally based European broadcasters and compares them with three European channels broadcasting to global audiences. Interestingly enough, the results show that a global discourse, in terms of constructions of "togetherness," could be found on all the channels. It was far from the case that transnational

broadcasters contribute more global outlooks than the national channels; in one case a transnational broadcaster even provided a less global outlook—a finding that indisputably strengthens my suggestion to include national media when exploring global news discourse.

The global outlook described above to a great extent resembles the cosmopolitan outlook outlined by Beck (2006) in which antagonistic distinctions are dissolved and the global is consensually unified. Regardless of this, I would suggest that the understanding of a global news discourse should not be restricted to constructions of global consent and a united world. The simple reason for this is that such a reductionist approach would inevitably lead to the discouraging conclusion that a global news discourse is a rather unfeasible project—at least if one hopes to see this type of discourse become more than just an exception. In much previous research, it is evident that a global news discourse largely has been equated with “peace journalism,” “humanitarian journalism,” and other forms of journalism that promote “community” (cf. Van Ginneken, 2005). Antagonistic constructions of the global in news coverage, such as polarized and conflict-laden depictions of “us” and “them,” have accordingly been dismissed as “nonglobal” in character. However, it does not seem realistic to expect the cosmopolitan outlook to be omnipresent, and it is more or less unavoidable that a global news discourse also, to a greater or lesser extent, will display and contribute to the manufactured (in)security that, for instance, the globalizing risks entail (Beck, 2009). As pointed out by Ojala (2011), a global news discourse inevitably (re)produces particular framings of the global. The cosmopolitan outlook should instead be regarded as a potential but not always realized outlook in a global news discourse; its occurrence is contextually determined and, perhaps, is more likely in relation to humanitarian crises through emotional appeals as shown above. Thus, a global news discourse, as theorized here, encompasses consensual and unifying constructions of the global *as well as* antagonistic and polarizing ones (Berglez, 2008). Arguably, both of these framings would create the sense of “globality” or “global enmeshment” (Cottle, 2011, p. 79) that a global news discourse is ultimately about, although not necessarily in the cosmopolitan sense.

In sum, events or processes in various parts of the world, be they natural disasters, environmental hazards, or wars, take global shape not only, or even primarily, in terms of worldwide impacts or as effects of the technological reach of transnational media, but also, and most essentially in this context, in terms of their formation in the news media where people, places, and objects are linked more closely together.

The Question of a European Public Sphere and Identity

Much research on the possible emergence of a European public sphere and a European identity has been carried out over the last years. Volkmer (2008), as an example of an “optimistic” view on this, argues that advances in satellite technology have created, if not a public sphere in the traditional sense, at least “a platform for new, interesting flows of trans-European communication” (p. 231). However, there are also quite a few voices that are less hopeful regarding the possibility of a European public sphere. Sparks (2007a, 2007b) concludes that despite the development of supra-national political bodies such as the EU, there is as yet no sign of a corresponding media system; most media remain confined within the borders of the nation-state. This is commonly used by authors in the field as an argument against the possible development of a European public sphere: since there is no functioning European media system,

the prospects of a European public sphere are rather discouraging. And, additionally, since the national realm has considerable power as *the* point of reference for the making of identity, the chances of creating a common European “us” are minute. The only viable way to enhance political interest at the EU-level among citizens and to instill a sense of European belonging is for national news media to present news about the political institutions of the EU: EU policy making, EU-level actors, EU politics, and so on. The more frequently EU topics appear in various national media, the better the breeding ground for a sense of community and for the development of “Europeanized national public spheres,” it has been argued. Accordingly, EU topics in national media have been measured quantitatively—the more EU topics, the more the transnationalization, or Europeanization, of national news media, it has been assumed (e.g., D’Haenens, 2005; De Vreese, 2007; Koopmans & Erbe, 2004; Machill, Beiler, & Fisher, 2006; Polonska-Kumunguyi & Kimunguyi, 2011).

I would argue, first, that the sheer presence of EU topics in national news media does not automatically lead to the emergence of a transnational discourse. Following the argumentation above, in order for EU topics in national media to contribute transnational outlooks and not traditional “foreign” ones, they have to be, in one way or another, discursively *connected* to local and/or national conditions. These connections should not be interpreted in terms of mere domestications of EU topics (what will happen with Swedish moist snuff when the EU legislates against it?), which instead reproduce national outlooks (Sweden *and* the EU), but through the discursive *intermingling* of EU and national horizons, for instance the forging of a common European “us,” as in the example presented below (Sweden *in* the EU). Second, it is not only EU news in national media (whether intertwined with national horizons or not), that might contribute to a sense of EU belonging. Instead, such topics tend to impose themselves on national media from above as “Europeanization projects” (Lauristin, 2007). As argued above, the everyday reporting of events or phenomena of transnational scope have, because of their borderless character, the potential to trigger discursive transformation. The transnationalization of risks and crises such as climate change, terrorism, and financial crises pushes even national media—slowly and unsteadily perhaps, and most likely not at the same pace everywhere, yet nevertheless—in the direction of transnational modes of reporting. These transnational outlooks could well be in embryonic stages, not entirely explicit in nature, but instead commonsensical and “banal” in the words of Billig (1995), and deeply embedded and naturalized in the everyday language of news. This means that they are difficult to capture empirically without the aid of sensitive discourse analytical tools (Olausson, 2010, 2011).

Some authors (e.g., Schlesinger, 2008) dismiss the entire notion of a European identity and argue that there are too many obstacles, such as the lack of a common language, history, and worldview, for such an identity to evolve. However, it is not very productive to cling to this “cultural” conception of identity, which can only lead to the conclusion that a European identity is a more or less unachievable project. Instead, identity could be treated in a more modest way that does not demand cultural homogeneity; from such a perspective, identity concerns the *identification with a political “us”* in relation to some given events, phenomena, or issues more than others (Mouffe, 1995, 2005). Thus, European identity could simply be treated as, in the words of Habermas and Derrida (2003), “a feeling of common political belonging” (p. 293) as is illustrated by the empirical example presented next.

Elsewhere (Olausson, 2010), I have shown how the embryo of a European political identity is being forged in Swedish news reporting on climate change. In the construction of this transnational outlook, the discursive transcendence of national identity is pivotal and occurs when the national and the transnational become so closely entwined that they merge into a common "us." Admittedly, this study also confirms the common conclusion of media research that national identity holds a hegemonic position in national news media. In this case, it is constantly reproduced through, for instance, elements of national self-glorification such as "If any country can manage this, Sweden can" and "Sweden is one of the countries that have succeeded best." The national outlook is also nourished through domestications of the climate issue, for example when maps of Sweden recurrently fade in and out between images of flooded areas and other alleged consequences of the changing climate on the television screen.

However, it is also evident that the national mode of reporting does not entirely preclude the emergence of transnational outlooks. As a matter of fact, it seems as if national identity functions as a necessary anchoring mechanism in the construction of a common European "us" that momentarily dissolves the distinction between the national and the transnational. Sweden and the EU are on the one hand mentioned in the news reporting as two separate entities, but on the other hand they are also closely tied to each other in the sense of their all being part of the group of "climate heroes." In contrast to the "climate villain," the United States, "we," the EU, take climate change seriously and make earnest efforts to mitigate it, the message reads. The quotation from the broadsheet *Dagens Nyheter* "Perhaps it is not unknown to us in Sweden and Europe that greenhouse gas emissions cause great changes in the world climate" implies how national identity is transcended and incorporated into a European identity, how a common "us" is established.

Thus, the already established and naturalized national outlook becomes a means to introduce a transnational counterpart, which is not yet an integral part of everyday thinking and discourse. In the news program *Rapport*, produced by the Swedish public service broadcaster, SVT, a sense of European community takes shape in relation to the climate issue, through an intriguing blend of national and transnational identity positions. A "we" that transcends the national and includes the European sphere is constructed in the initial phrase of the reporter's statement: "Exactly the way we do things within the EU . . ." However, when the reporter continues, this European "we" becomes integrated with the national: ". . . says our Swedish Minister for the Environment," with "our" here referring to the national community. In a similar vein, Krzyzanowski (2009), in a longitudinal discourse analysis of a number of national media, shows that Europe has changed its role from being "an adversary or source of problems for the nation, to becoming the 'bearer' of common values for all (or at least several) European nation-states" (p. 18).

The purpose of these brief empirical examples of the construction of a European political identity is to demonstrate that national and transnational outlooks are not engaged in discursive struggles where the destruction of one or the other is the inevitable outcome (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). As Sparks (2007a) suggests, the local, national, and global exist alongside each other in news discourse, and tensions do arise between them, but "the evidence does not support the contention that one is being undermined by the other two" (p. 150). I would even go so far as to claim that they in fact are highly *dependent* on each other: in order for less established transnational outlooks to become naturalized and integrated in everyday thinking and discourse, they need to become anchored within the familiar and established

national horizon (Olausson & Højjer, 2010). Thus, there is reason to suppose that national and transnational discourses work interactively and that they mutually (re)construct each other (cf. Delanty, 2000; Olausson, 2007).

Conclusion

In this article, I have put forth the argument that the research field of global media needs to acknowledge not only the trans-boundary nature of media technology, but to a greater extent, the very knowledge production of the global by suggesting a discourse theoretical approach for the study of media globalization. When the given assumptions about what exactly the “global” in “global media” refers to are changed from being a matter of geographic reach to becoming a discursive feature, then it is possible to discover transnational and even global “embryos” in several as yet relatively unexplored media contexts, as has been shown (cf. Berglez, 2008).

As noted by Volkmer (2003), there is still a remarkable focus on the cultural impact of new communication technologies in the sociological debate on globalization. Cultural transformation has also been a dominating issue, not least in the disagreements between the fields of international communication and cultural studies over the cultural imperialism thesis. Hafez (2007) for his part regards the absence of cultural transformation generated by cross-border communication as a sign that a truly global media does not exist. Without the evidence of such transformation—that “receiving cultures are changed by transmitting cultures in the process of cross-border communication through the Internet, satellite broadcasting, international broadcasting or through media imports and exports” (Hafez, 2007, p. 14)—the notion of global media seems to remain utopian.

It is true that the discourse perspective on global media, as proposed here, says little about cross-border communication and cultural transformation, but it does not totally exclude these aspects. In particular, this holds true if we go beyond the traditional technology platforms of the news media—newspapers, radio, and television—and widen the focus of research to include Web-based forms of news reporting. The digital versions of newspapers, for instance, offer links to other websites around the world, hyperlinks that enable user interaction and so on. The digitalization of (national) news allows, to a greater extent than previous technologies, for cross-border communication and perhaps also cultural transformation (Berglez, 2011; Heinrich, 2008). If we also add the immense number of other information providers who operate online in social media such as Twitter, and in parallel with traditional news media, the likelihood for cross-cultural communication and transformation possibly increases. But what is deemed even more important here is *political* transformation—how the nation-state logic of political identity loosens up, is transgressed, and transforms into transnational political identities in certain contexts, as in the example above of the discursive construction of EU-identity in relation to climate change. I would argue that the discourse perspective contributes knowledge of a fundamental ingredient, both in a global public sphere and in what Berglez (2013) describes as a global political culture, namely how and under what circumstances the media—national or transnational—provide their audiences with a global interpretative framework capable of including politically relevant interconnections between various geopolitical scales (cf. Volkmer, 2003).

A driving argument of this line of reasoning is that it is not reasonable to expect the news media, be they national or transnational, to produce global knowledge all the time; the reporting on certain objects or phenomena, such as global risks, is probably more inclined to assume global characteristics than the reporting on local events such as a traffic accident. But it is also true that the media do not reproduce the nation-state logic throughout their reporting, and sensitive discourse analytical tools are needed if we want to capture the oscillation between national and global outlooks. And the same goes for the media audience: our national identity positions are in all probability activated in relation to quite a few of the events and phenomena reported in the media, but in certain cases and under certain circumstances—possibly in relation to distant suffering or global risks such as climate change—we accept global outlooks provided by the media and take on transnational identities, even if only for a brief moment (e.g., Olausson, 2007, 2011; Olausson & Höijer, 2010). The national and global are not mutually exclusive, but reinforce and reconstruct one another; they constitute two sides of the same coin.

The discourse approach to global media studies that I theorize here is certainly not the perspective that provides us with the only “correct” version of reality. However, this perspective is currently somewhat obscured by the “skeptical” and “globalist” views on media globalization that largely deal with transnational media networks and technologies, and there is reason to draw attention to the discursive aspect of global media, which is something qualitatively different from technological reach.

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