

Sahana Udupa, **Making News in Global India: Media, Publics, Politics**, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015, 277 pp., \$103.00 (hardcover), \$30.99 (paperback).

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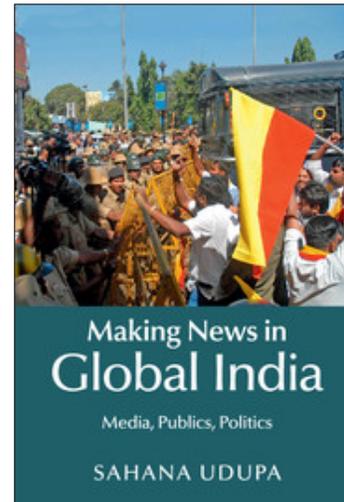
“Every localization is not local in the geographical sense. It is local in my context. This is what is driving newspapers post liberalization” (p. 43), says a senior editorial member of the *Times of India*, India’s largest English-language newspaper, in response to author Sahana Udupa’s question about the paper’s lack of rural-issues coverage. Udupa’s larger project in **Making News in Global India: Media, Publics, Politics** is, in some ways, a thorough deconstruction and examination of the animus embedded within this statement and its speaker.

How, Udupa asks, are the worlds of contemporary Indian journalists reshaping conceptions of the global and the local within both politics and print media in the emerging “global city” of Bangalore? Udupa divides her focus between the English-language journalists at the *Times of India* and Kannada-language journalists at several newspapers, particularly *Vijaya Karnataka*, in an effort to complicate the easy binary of the “global” and the “local.” Using an ethnographic approach that centers on the lived experiences and practices that undergird print news media’s production, Udupa structures her book in a manner that foregrounds the multiplicity, contingency, and interrelatedness of the Kannada and English-language print media worlds and the actors who inhabit them.

Opening her book with the *Times of India*, Udupa examines how English-language journalists and media were crucial to the discursive construction of Bangalore as a model of desirable global urbanism. This imagination, Udupa argues, was shaped by a complicated idea of locality and urban citizenship that was “de-spatialized and suffused with global connections” (p. 43) and clearly demarcated and separated from surrounding rural areas and “traditional” concerns.

The *Times of India* also promoted notions of civic engagement that revolved around consumer aspirations and corporate stardom. The newspaper hosted panels of corporate leaders to discuss civic concerns and explicitly promoted the real estate industry through “property shows” that celebrated a consumer-oriented civic ethos. This consumer–corporate model of civic society promoted by the *Times of India* posited the government and political concerns as inherently antagonistic to the progress of Bangalore as a world-class city. Udupa’s work thus reflects similar projects in human geography (Ghertner, 2015) that examine how notions of urban aesthetics and desirability intersect with the dynamics of class and caste in venues like public interest litigations and urban environmentalism.

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Udupa's more compelling—and in some ways, for the study of international and global media, more important—intervention comes in her study of the Kannada-language press, particularly *Vijaya Karnataka*. Here, drawing from South Asianist scholars like Lisa Mitchell (2009) and Sumathi Ramaswamy (1997), who have considered how regional-language publics in India come to be constituted through both practice and affective attachment, Udupa devises the notion of a *bhasha* public. The *bhasha* public, Udupa argues, is “self-consciously set within the overarching context of urban transformation and consumer modernity” (p. 133); it “constitutes practices where binaries of formal-informal or civil society-political society become untenable” (p. 133). Through this notion of *bhasha* media practices and the *bhasha* public, Udupa produces an account of vernacular language news production that forgoes the global-local dichotomy for a more nuanced and thoughtful understanding of the multiple competing imaginaries of locality and globality at work in both the Kannada-language and English-language press.

Kannada, Udupa argues, serves to index reading publics that did not fall under “English bourgeois” or “corporate votaries of neoliberalism” (in sharp contrast to the *Times of India's* desirable urban space and readers). Kannada-language journalists and newspapers had a complex relationship with the nativist Kannada-language movement. *Kannada* was a flexible term—deployed at once to unify South Indians against North Indian migrants and also to unify Kannada speakers against their neighbors when it came to local territorial and resource-sharing disputes (p. 147).

Udupa also examines how caste dynamics have historically shaped Kannada-language news production. She observes that in contrast to Benedict Anderson's (1983) widely cited theory of “print capitalism,” historical Kannada-language news production functioned instead as “print communalism,” wherein publishers indifferent to commercial success utilized print media to promote and advocate for a community's interests, particularly the interests of caste groups and linguistic associations.

These historical dynamics, Udupa contends, continue to shape notions of merit, modernity, and distinction within the contemporary journalism industry. While caste dynamics were most pronounced in the Kannada-language news industry, notions of caste practices also shaped English-language journalists' critique of their positioning in regard to the industry, the “global” narratives it constructed, and the ideal readers they were writing for. As Udupa observes, senior management at English-language papers “concurred that their reporters were far removed from the ideal globetrotting cosmopolitan reader with ‘infinite’ spending power” (p. 199).

Udupa further illuminates the contrasts and interwoven concerns between the Kannada-language and English-language news worlds through a close examination of two instances of varying news coverage: the *Pink Chaddi* (pink underwear) campaign and the construction of the Bangalore International Airport. The Pink Chaddi campaign—with which Udupa opens and closes her book—was a campaign started by Bangalore-based activists to protest a series of attacks on women in public spaces like pubs and restaurants.

While the *Times of India* published articles supportive of women's rights to public consumption and covered the attacks as a “formidable barrier to the country's onward march in the global marketplace” (p. 10), Kannada-language papers were more ambivalent in their presentation of the Pink Chaddi

campaign. Kannada-language papers criticized the English-language media's defense of the campaign, arguing that pub culture "would unleash other social evils such as illicit relationships, rape, murder, and gambling" (p. 212), and provided minimal coverage of the Pink Chaddi campaign, arguing that Kannada-language newspaper readers were not interested in the cosmopolitan environments the campaign was arguing for. Kannada-language newspapers' lack of interest, Udupa illustrates, resides within a complex understanding of locality and "local readers" that challenges binary notions of opposition or domination.

Udupa's other salient example of contrasting coverage between the English- and Kannada-language print media comes from a detailed content analysis of newspaper articles about the construction of the Bangalore International Airport in 2008. Looking across three English-language and two Kannada-language newspapers, Udupa highlights how the news media's varying coverage of this issue highlighted the deeper ideological and structural forces at work in the journalism industry as a whole.

Udupa's content analysis serves as an excellent bolster to the multiple stories conveyed in her ethnographic encounters. Her analysis reveals that while English-language media conceptualized the airport project as a boost to Bangalore's neoliberal aspirations and cosmopolitan desirability, Kannada newspapers focused on political kickbacks and local corruption surrounding the massive construction project. Kannada-language newspapers also focused on the land acquisition, the deleterious effects of compensation money on landowner households, and the displacement of farming communities for the construction project (pp. 159–161), a minor concern in English-language newspapers. While English-language newspapers were more likely to rely on technocrats and industrialists to source their coverage of the airport, Kannada-language newspapers relied on local politicians, farmers' associations, and caste organizations (p. 162).

The existence and contestation of these differences are, Udupa argues, ultimately illustrative of the broader work of the news media, which is to regulate and reproduce the tensions between desire and visibility. Udupa argues that "the desire-enabled discourses of global-urban modernity comes into direct conflict with socially structured democratic visibility" (p. 18). For every Pink Chaddi campaign, there are farmers' agitations for fair compensation to contend for legitimacy and visibility within the public sphere—a public sphere mediated by these very same newspapers and the work and lives of their competing and contradictory journalists.

The book is an excellent model for communication research based in ethnographic methods. Her richly textured accounts of news production and journalists' lives in both the Kannada- and English-language print media worlds are detailed and evocative and supported by evidence drawn from other methodological approaches, such as the content analysis of the Bangalore International Airport articles. This multimethodological approach strengthens the overall narrative and provides a solid foundation from which to appreciate her larger theoretical contributions.

This book would also be of great interest to scholars working in multilingual regions, as it provides a compelling and flexible theoretical framework (bhasha media) through which to understand the competing claims and desires mediated within a multilingual media environment. Udupa's project also

provides a richly textured account of South Asian media life, and as such would be of great interest to scholars seeking out more nuanced accounts of media production within areas of the Global South.

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